Small Repairs

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/23917363.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Jack Crawford, Alana Bloom
Additional Tags:	Hannibal and Will both try different forms of the seduction game, Will offers to be a handyman, Hanners offers to help Will cook, Both are working angles, but that doesn't mean the feelings are fake, Fluff, Smut, just a touch of crack
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2020-04-29 Completed: 2020-05-27 Words: 20,945 Chapters: 5/5

Small Repairs

by Devereauxs_Disease

Summary

It started with a clogged drain. Will put himself in a position to rescue Hannibal's dinner party, hoping to ingratiate himself to the good doctor as he gathered evidence. What he didn't anticipate was how much fun it was to fix things for Hannibal Lecter.
In return, Hannibal offered to act as a cooking tutor for Will Graham, talking him through making dinner nearly every night.
Are small home repairs really enough to fix what's been broken between these two?

AKA Dev's Season 2 AU where she makes Will Hannibal's personal handyman.

Notes

This is a goofy little story that I pitched on the discord chat and totally got tricked into writing. As always, a stupid oneshot idea spiraled out of control and now I've spent about 16 hours researching basic plumbing and carpentry repairs. I hope you like the fic, if you don't...at least I know how to fix up my house.

As always, thanks to Gwilbers for fixing all my atrocious errors.

See the end of the work for more notes

Unclogging Pipes

Will rapped his knuckles on Hannibal's door, cradling a bottle of wine that was expensive enough to make him cringe when he handed the girl at the fancy liquor store his credit card. He mentally ran through his excuse about why he couldn't stay for Hannibal's party. It was a bit elaborate, poor Buster had torn a toenail while chasing foxes in the yard and Will had to get home to ensure the dog hadn't chewed through the dressing on his paw. He had selected Buster for fake injury since Hannibal expressed a fondness for the pompous little terrier. Hopefully, Hannibal's soft spot would mean he could make a clean getaway before the other guests began to arrive.

His purpose was simple: Get in, make a good impression on Hannibal and leave. Just a glimpse of the bait, no more. Hannibal wasn't an easy fish to catch, and Will would have to be careful with his lure. A few minutes, a taste of Will's regret that he couldn't spend time with Hannibal — giving the fish some line until the hook sank in — that should be enough to keep Hannibal swimming around him for a bit longer.

When the door opened, Will found the Hannibal in a bit of a tizzy.

Well, *tizzy* by Hannibal Lecter standards.

Hannibal had opened the door with a slight frown on his face. His hair had yet to be gelled into the perfect coif he preferred and his shirt sleeves were rolled up.

There was a stain on his white apron.

Will couldn't stop staring at it. Of course, an apron's purpose was to be stained, but in the weeks the empath had spent visiting Hannibal for impromptu talks that lead to dinner, Will couldn't remember the garment ever getting soiled. The smudge looked lurid on the pristine fabric, Will wanted to cover it, to shield Hannibal from the world so they wouldn't see the flaw on his person suit.

"I can't stay, but I brought-" Will lowered the bottle when Hannibal huffed, his bangs blowing softly over his forehead. "Is everything alright?"

Hannibal's mouth ticked minutely further down. Will's eyes widened, for Hannibal that was practically tears.

"It seems my sink has chosen this moment to…" Hannibal waved a hand in the air. "Expire."

"Expire? How does a sink expire?"

"By attempting to drown me and the catering staff." Hannibal glowered as if he sink had deliberately attempted to sabotage his party. Will pulled his lips into his mouth and bit down, lest Hannibal see him smile at his sour expression.

“You want me to take a look?”

“I thought you couldn’t stay?” Hannibal looked down, brushing at the stain on his apron. “I’ll call my plumber.”

“An emergency call on a Friday after five? You’ll have to mortgage the house to pay for that,” Will handed Hannibal the bottle, brushing by him before the doctor could protest. “At least let me take a look before you call.”

Will found the kitchen a bit of a disaster. Caterers milled in the doorway to the dining room, wet footprints trailed from the sink around the room. The kitchen bar was filled with half-completed food prep — a pile of vegetables neatly sliced, some sort of pastry dough warming on the marble counter. The heart of the chaos was the sink, filled to the brim with water, little pieces of food, and a cluster bubbles floating around in the eddy the shifting dishes created.

Pushing up the sleeves on his Henley, Will reached into the mire, moving plates to the counter and lowering the water level. When he was finished, the water level had lowered considerably. There were no rattling or pressure sounds, the tap worked fine — it was likely something as simple as a clogged drain.

Hannibal trailed Will into the kitchen, his eyes on the bottle in his hands. “This is an exceptional bottle, Will. Wherever did you find it?”

“Girl at the store down the street said it was your favorite.”

Hannibal smiled, his fingers caressing the label. “It’s terribly thoughtful, Will.”

Will kept his eyes down, feeling his cheeks color. A wave of something warm and tight churned in Will’s gut. It was a feeling Hannibal provoked more and more since Jack had sanctioned Will’s “fishing expedition”.

Being helpful was just a part of the plan, so was the wine. He could submit that receipt to Jack and get reimbursed tomorrow.

But he wouldn’t.

Will wanted to know that he’d given Hannibal the expensive wine. That he’d made the doctor smile and temporarily forget his distress. He didn’t want the FBI involved. He also didn’t want to examine too closely what that meant.

“So,” Will clapped his hands, looking at the murky overflowing sink. “Got any tools?”

“What tool were you looking for?” Hannibal’s eyes warmed, and Will tried not to smile at the implication.

“Adjustable wrench would be great, maybe a bucket to drain all this?”

Hannibal nodded, carefully setting the bottle of wine down and disappearing into his pantry. When he emerged, he had a box of tools that still had a store tag on it, a towel, and a

bucket that somehow matched the countertops.

Handing Will the tools, Hannibal sat the bucket by the sink before carefully laying the towel on the floor.

“So you don’t soil yourself while inspecting my underbelly,” Hannibal said.

Will grinned before dropping to his knees and shimmying under the sink. Just like every other part of Hannibal’s house, the sink pipes were immaculate. Will pictured Hannibal, carefully laying out his dusting towel before settling beneath the piping to dust. How often did one have to dust a drain trap anyway?

Something glinted and Will turned.

Apparently, while he was dusting, Hannibal also liked to tape scalpels to the wood trim. He wondered where else he could find a scalpel, discretely hidden. He wondered what Jack would make of such a thing. Then decided he didn’t really care.

Grabbing a wrench and the bucket, Will carefully set them under the drain trap before he began to loosen the slip nut. Water poured into the bucket while Will shook out the trap. There was something moving in the piece of pipe. Reaching into the drain with his index finger he prayed he wouldn’t find another ear.

Will could feel Hannibal’s eyes on him, tracing up his body like a physical touch.

“Did you find the trouble?” Hannibal asked. Will could hear the sound of a stopper being pulled.

“Got it,” Will yanked hard, pulling out a crumpled piece of sodden cloth. He frowned at the scrap before reattaching the drain trap. Carefully he slid the sloshing bucket out from under the sink before sliding out himself.

Hannibal leaned against the island, two glasses of red in one hand. With his free hand, he reached down to help Will up.

Will took Hannibal’s hand in his, marveling that a hand so soft could hold enough strength to lift him effortlessly. When he was upright, Will swayed into the heat emanating off Hannibal before forcing himself back a step. He immediately regretted letting go of Hannibal’s hand.

Holding up a sodden grey lump, Will smiled. “Lose a napkin?”

Hannibal sneered at the tangle of fabric and grease as though it had betrayed his family. “I would like to know what hooligan shoved it into my drain. I pay that catering company handsomely for exemplary service and am repaid with an overflowing sink and ruined Queen Anne’s lace.”

Will ducked his head to hide his laugh. Hannibal was very sensitive about his things and it wouldn’t do to look like he was mocking them. When he looked up, he caught the ghost of amusement floating across Hannibal’s face.

“You find me ridiculous.”

“No.” Will ran a few words over his tongue, selecting one that tasted right. “Your fury is righteous, even if I can’t quite understand it.”

“Understand it or not, you’re undoubtedly the hero of the evening.” Hannibal stepped forward, extending a wine glass to Will. The empath wiped his hands on his pants before taking the glass, then worried that Hannibal would find the gesture crass.

Hannibal used his free hand to gently grip Will’s elbow and lead him from the kitchen. The doctor raised an eyebrow at the catering staff, who burst from the dining room into the kitchen, a flurry of movement taking over the room as they left. Hannibal ushered Will into the study. He took a delicate sip of wine and Will found his eyes caught by a droplet that clung to his lower lip.

Will sipped his wine, it tasted of fruit and some spice he couldn’t identify. He wondered what it would taste like on Hannibal’s skin.

“No big deal, you just needed someone to unclog your pip-” Will choked on the words, flushing to the tips of his ears. God, he sounded like he was in a porn. Pretty soon he’d be offering Hannibal a lube job.

“Are you alright, Will? Is the wine?” Hannibal sat on the sofa in the study.

“Yeah,” Will cleared his throat. He started for the spot next to Hannibal, but redirected at the last minute to sit on the leather armchair instead. “Wrong pipe.”

“I hope you find the right one soon.”

Will paused, mouth halfway to his glass for another sip. He shook his head, he was hearing things.

“So, what draws you away from me tonight?”

“Huh?”

Hannibal sipped his wine, head tilting. “You could only stay long enough to save the dinner party, not attend it.”

“Oh, *uh*, it’s Buster.”

“Ah! My small friend. How is he?”

Will sipped his wine to hide his smile. “He tore a toenail chasing foxes. I wrapped him up but-”

“Should he see a vet? That sounds painful.” Hannibal’s brow immediately furrowed and Will marveled that a man who could slice Beverly Katz into pieces, would genuinely worry about the toenail of a dog. It was…endearing.

The word sat heavily on Will's tongue, he took another drink to wash it away.

"He'll be fine; I just need to be sure he doesn't chew through the wrapping." Will smiled. "It's a hazard of having a terrier."

"Going to ground has its hazards?" Hannibal sipped his wine.

"It does."

Hannibal leaned forward, just breaking into Will's space. "I hope he finds his quarry without injury next time."

Will looked at his wine. The color reminded him of Hannibal's eyes. "Maybe he should stop chasing it all together."

"It's hard to convince a terrier to let go of something once he's scented it."

"Not if you redirect him."

"How would one do that?"

"Give him a task, something he likes doing." Will drained his glass. "If he's occupied with something he enjoys, he won't bother with the chase."

"How fascinating." Hannibal finished his glass, sighing as he stood. "I know there's no hope in you staying for dinner, but could I convince you to keep me company as I oversee the caterers?"

Will grinned, handing Hannibal his empty glass. Their fingers brushed and Will let his eyes drift closed softly. "Want me to guard the napkins, do you?"

"I was planning on stationing you by the drain."

Laughing, Will rubbed the back of his neck. There was a temptation to stay, to trail behind Hannibal all evening, smile and greet the guests with the doctor, keep everyone's drinks filled so Hannibal wouldn't need to stop telling a story about —

What the fuck was he thinking? "I *uh*, I think I should go."

Hannibal tightened his mouth, tipping his chin up. "I thank you again for your help tonight, Will. Whatever would I do without you?"

"Pay too much for a plumber." Will stopped in the hallway, hand resting on the doorknob. "Hannibal?"

"Hmmm?"

He shouldn't.

He absolutely shouldn't.

He should go home, call Jack, report on the scalpels, submit the receipt for the wine, and not worry about Hannibal until their next session.

“Don’t-” Will shook his head, knocking the protests from his mind. “If you need something fixed, call me first.”

“I’d hate to monopolize your time.”

“I’d hate to think you paid too much for an easy repair.”

“I couldn’t possibly inconvenience you like that.” Hannibal turned, but Will grabbed his hand. He didn’t like the idea of some stranger poking around in this house, finding little clues to the real man behind the person suit.

“Your kitchen is always open to friends, isn’t it?”

“Of course.” Hannibal looked from his wrist to Will’s eyes. He made no move to free himself, but there was a curiosity behind the doctor’s deep-set eyes.

“My toolbelt is always open to mine.” Will closed his eyes. He was back in that porn again. “I mean, that, not my belt, but my tool is, *shit*, I just meant-”

“It’s something that you enjoy doing.” Will looked down, somehow, he was no longer holding Hannibal’s wrist. The doctor was holding his.

Will nodded.

“I promise to call you the next time an errant napkin causes a flood.” Hannibal sounded very solemn, but his eyes were dancing. Will’s mouth twisted into a small smile. “Now, please, go home and give Buster my best during his recuperation.”

Will leaned forward, then reeled back. What the hell was he thinking?

“I…sure.” He fled into the night.

Hannibal smiled politely as Mrs. Komeda told the story of how she met her husband. Beneath the table, his hands ran over the slightly sodden scrap of lace he had shoved down the drain.

It seemed he was right — Will had no intention of staying for dinner. And his little ploy to keep him longer had worked beautifully. He thought of Will’s eyes, transfixed by the smudge Hannibal had carefully rubbed on his apron. Perhaps Will liked the idea of sullying something pristine. Or perhaps the empath enjoyed the idea of restoring something until no hint of a flaw could be found on its immaculate surface.

If you need something fixed, call me first.

Hannibal let his smile widen, the party chatter fading into a pleasant din around him. He would be in need of another home repair soon.

Breaking Some Eggs

Chapter Summary

Will decides to make dinner for two, virtually.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"You were just at his house, Will, you didn't see anything?" Will looked at the phone on his counter, Jack booming from the speaker. He thought about the scalpel, taped ever so securely under the sink.

"I would have told you if I had, Jack." He closed his eyes. "I just need more time."

It was true, he did need more time. Will wanted more fireside conversations, more small subtle smiles that seemed to grow without Hannibal noticing, more…Hannibal.

He just needed a few more weeks to glut himself on the doctor, then he'd mention the scalpels.

"I can give you time, but you need to give me more than that brilliant imagination of yours."

Will rolled his eyes. He was always brilliant when Jack needed something. "I'll tell you what I come up with at the next session."

"Good man, Will. Goodbye."

Will blinked at the phone after it disconnected.

Good man.

That was what he wanted to be, wasn't it? Will let his mind drift to the Ripper tableaus. He tried to focus on the horror, on the loss of life, but his mind kept offering him the brash colors and symbolism. He shook his head. He thought of Beverly, of Abigail. A good man — he was a good man.

Will went to his cabinets and grabbed a can of soup. He plopped the condensed glob into a pot, followed by a can-full of water. He looked at the slurry before him, sighing as he stuck it on a burner. He'd eaten it a dozen times in the last few months. It was quick. It was nourishing. It was fine.

His fingers tapped on the counter next to the phone. When the scent of heated broth reached his nose, he picked up his phone and dialed.

“Hello, Will.”

“Hi.” Will felt his cheeks heating. He had to say something, anything. He tried to recall the exact blue of Abigail’s eyes, but the eyes he conjured were whiskey warm, flecked with beautiful, bloody red.

“Are you alright, Will? Is there something trou-”

“How do you make soup?” Will clenched his eyes shut. Jesus fuck it was a wonder Hannibal found him interesting at all.

An amused breath filled Will’s ear. “Any particular type?”

“*Uh*…Campbell’s Beef and Vegetables with Barley.”

Another soft breath echoed in his ear, Will could almost feel the laugh against his skin. “I don’t think I’ve ever made that recipe, Will.”

Will smiled, eyes still shut. “I know, but I’m looking in my pot and suddenly I just… don’t want it.”

“Don’t you?” Hannibal’s tone ticked up. Will waited for the veiled statement that was sure to follow. “It’s a shame when we force ourselves to consume things we don’t want.”

It was a shame. Will stirred the soup, so tired of meals that inspired nothing in him. Tired of pretending he wanted them. “I was hoping you might suggest some spices to liven it up.”

“Is your soup tasteless?”

“Somewhat.” Will listened to the silence on the other end of the line. He could practically hear Hannibal’s brain ticking as it rifled through spice profiles.

“Do you have eggs?”

“Eggs?” Will pulled away to stare at his phone.

“I can feel your glare, Will.” Will ducked his head, he could feel Hannibal’s smile.

“You want me to put an egg in barley soup?”

“Do you have eggs?”

“Yes.”

“Hmmm,” That warm pleased sound again, Will rolled his shoulders as it washed over him. “Butter?”

“What the hell are you going to do to my soup, Dr. Lecter?”

“Will, it’s ten o’clock. I imagine you’re hungry. This will go more quickly if you answer my questions.”

“I have butter.”

“Excellent. Grab the pot off the burner.”

Will was moving before he realized it. “OK.”

“Is it hot?”

“Yes.”

“Then the next step is critical and must be done carefully.”

Will’s heart rate ticked up; he tightened his grip on the handle. “I’m listening.”

“Take the soup…”

“Yeah?”

“And pour it down your sink.”

Will laughed, in spite of himself. “What?”

“Get rid of it. I’m not helping you to put lipstick on a pig.”

“Lipstick on a pig? It’s just soup, Hanni-”

“We shall make an omelet, pour out the soup, Will.”

Will felt his cheeks heat just a bit as he stepped to the sink and upended the pot. “Waste of food.”

“You and I will have to discuss the definition of food at our next session.”

Will raised an eyebrow. “Can I put the pot in the sink now, or should I toss it because it’s been tainted?”

Hannibal made an unamused noise, which just made Will smile wider. The doctor shifted and Will heard something, like wood creaking. Something flickered in his brain, that noise…

“Will?”

“Sorry, what?” Will scrunched his nose in a silent curse.

“I asked if you had a nonstick pan — ideally 10 inches.”

“That would be ideal.”

“What?”

Will pulled his face away from the phone, convinced his embarrassment was seeping through the receiver to Baltimore. Here he was, back in that porn film again.

“Uh…” Will opened the cabinet and rattled pans as noisily as possible. “Just looking for a pan…”

Will grabbed a nonstick pan before Hannibal could get him to say anything more mortifying. “Got it.”

“Excellent, set it on the counter and get your eggs and butter.”

“How many eggs?”

“How hungry are you, Will?” The low tones of the question washed over him and Will felt a prickling sensation at the base of his skull.

Will swallowed. “Starving.”

“Three eggs, then.”

Will nodded to no one in particular, walking over to the fridge and retrieving three eggs and butter. “OK.”

“I suppose it’s too much to ask that you have fresh chives.”

“I have dried-”

“No.” Hannibal thought for a moment. “I’ll bring you a cutting from my plant at our next session. Tonight, we shall enjoy simplicity…Whisk the eggs in a bowl, please.”

“Yeah, OK.” Will put the phone on speaker and sat it aside. He grabbed a bowl and cracked the eggs into it. There was something viscerally satisfying about cracking each perfect oval and watching the innards leak out. The perfect little yolks wobbled in the bowl as Will pulled open a drawer to find his whisk. He found tongs, some sort of meat fork that came with a utensil pack, and three spatulas.

He cursed under his breath before turning to his door. The whisk sat by his boots, coated in muck.

“Will? Was there a mishap with the eggs?”

“What if I don’t have a whisk?”

“…I don’t understand the question.” Hannibal sounded utterly lost at the concept.

“I do have one, but I just, *uh*…use it for other things.”

“Will,” There was that noise again, the wooden creaking noise that lit up a part of Will’s brain. “I’m afraid I need further explanation.”

“When the dogs go outside, sometimes the snow gets clumped to their fur.”

“Yes.” Hannibal’s voice wavered. He sounded wary.

“Well, the clumps of snow are hard to get off, and if you don’t, they melt and you get these puddles all over the floor.” Will scrunched his eyes up and sped through the last bit. “But if I take the whisk outside with me and run it over the dogs, it gets most of the snow off of them in seconds.”

“You…whisk the dogs?”

“Just to get the snow off of them, and I haven’t washed the-”

“I suppose we can make do with a fork…I assume you haven’t used that to detangle Winston’s hair?”

“Well, not all of them.”

Hannibal laughed, an honest-to-god human laugh. It was louder and higher pitched than Will would have expected, and incredibly endearing. He found himself smiling at the phone. He opened another drawer and grabbed a fork. “One dog-free fork.”

“Excellent. Would you please beat the eggs?”

Will stabbed at each of the yolks, watching them bleed into the bowl. He clanged the fork around a few times before turning back to the phone. “Ready.”

“No, you’re not.”

“What?”

“They’re not whisked enough.”

“You can tell that from Baltimore?”

Hannibal sighed. “Four clangs does not a well-incorporated mixture make, Will.”

“It’s mixed.”

“The key to an excellent omelet is the egg mixture. Beat the eggs until they are one color and consistency.”

“…OK.” Will ran the fork through the eggs again, making sure to angle the bowl toward the phone so Hannibal could hear.

“You’re not looking to incorporate air, just combine the whites and yolks, when you lift your fork from the mixture, the drippings should be a solid yellow color.”

Will huffed, mixing with more vigor. “Wouldn’t scrambled eggs be easier?”

“We’re not making scrambled eggs.”

“Oh, well, fine then.” Will lifted the fork, the egg runoff was solid yellow. “I think I got it.”

“Wonderful. Put your pan on the stove and set your burner to low heat.”

“Low? Hannibal, I was hoping to have dinner tonight.”

“When was the last time your stovetop was calibrated?”

Will sighed. “Fine. Low.”

“Put about two tablespoons of butter in the pan; there should be no sizzling or foaming, we want it to melt slowly and without incident.”

“Incident free butter, check.” Will cut off a slab of butter and added it to the pan. There was no noise, just a languid melting. Will itched to turn the burner up, watch it pop and sizzle. He marveled at Hannibal’s patience, at the sort of meticulous control he exerted on everything from the psyches of FBI agents to a pat of butter.

“I should have asked before, Will. Do you have a spatula that isn’t used for pet grooming?”

“I have three.”

“Get one out, you’ll need it.”

“Rubber OK?”

“Preferable, actually.” Hannibal shifted and there was that noise again. “Once the butter is melted, whisk…or fork the egg mixture one more time and then pour it gently in the pan. Add salt and pepper. This is a critical moment, Will, you’ll need to be in constant motion. When the eggs are in the pan, I want you to gently stir them constantly. The last thing we want are large curds to form.”

“God forbid,” Will muttered as he poured the eggs into the pan. He stirred.

And stirred.

And stirred.

“Nothing’s happening.”

“Gently agitate the eggs as you stir.”

Will shot a sidelong glance at the phone before turning to the pan. “How do you feel about your mother?”

The phone at his elbow snorted derisively. “Shake the pan, Will.”

“Ah, fine. We’ll discuss your mother later.” Will told the eggs, beaming when he was rewarded with that silly laugh again. Will worked in silence for a few minutes, but Hannibal’s presence hung in the room. He felt the doctor behind him, leaning over his shoulder. Will had the strangest urge to lean back. He looked down at the pan. “Hannibal? Hannibal, it’s cooking!”

“Wonderful. Carefully scrape down the sides of the pan, but keep the pan moving.”

Will scraped, sloshing some egg on his wrist and forming a huge clump. “Fuck.”

“Will, set the pan aside.”

“What?”

“Flatten out the mixture and set it off the burner.”

“Hannibal, if you tell me to dump the fucking omelet, I’m bringing Burger King to the next session.”

“No need for threats, Will.” Hannibal’s voice was so warm, he felt so close. “Put the mixture aside please.”

Will sighed, setting the pan off to the side. “OK.”

“Tell me, Will, how is Buster faring?”

Will glanced down. The little terrier was sitting by Will’s feet, wagging his stumpy tail with hope in his eyes. “Huh?”

“Has he recovered?”

“Oh, right,” Will looked down at Buster, who pawed at his leg, eyes fixed on the stove. “He’s using his injury to beg for food.”

“Clever.”

“Annoying. He should know better.”

“I’m sure he does, but isn’t half the fun of such activities knowing they’re wrong?”

“I-” Will’s breath caught in his throat. He pictured Abigail Hobbs. He tried to count the freckles on her nose, anything to keep him from saying *yes*.

“It’s time, Will.”

“Is it?” Will blinked. He had an urge to abandon the pan and drive to Baltimore. His fingers twitched on the handle. “What?”

“The ambient heat of the pan should have solidified the base of the eggs, it’s time to roll it.” Will pursed his lips against the crushing taste of disappointment. “Put the eggs back on the burner and fold the first third of the egg over.”

Will moved the pan, gingerly poking at the eggs with his spatula. The eggs still looked runny to him, but he did as Hannibal said, gently lifting and folding the omelet. “OK.”

“Place another pat of butter on the pan, push it under the eggs to loosen them, then continue to fold.”

“Hannibal? Hannibal, it’s tearing.” Will didn’t understand why he sounded so panicked.

“Use the butter and the spatula, you can’t force an omelet, Will, only coax it.”

Will thought of Hannibal, trying his best to coax Will into the shape he wanted. “What if it tears? Do I throw it out if it breaks?”

“The great joy of omelets is you can never quite predict their final form, but they are always delicious.”

Will’s throat prickled, he sniffled once before pushing the eggs the rest of the way. The roll was misshapen, wider on the bottom and slightly lumpy. “Done.”

“Marvelous. Transfer it onto a plate, please. Rub another pat of butter over it and – I suppose it’s too much to hope that you’ve got fleur de sel there?”

Will laughed. “Yeah, it’s right next to my whisk.”

“Well, then another sprinkle of salt after the butter and you should be done.”

Will ran the pat of butter over the omelet, admiring the sheen the eggs gained. He sprinkled salt and turned to grab the phone.

“Thank you, it looks great.” Will’s thumb rubbed at the screen of his phone, he tried to will the goodbye from where it caught in his throat. “I guess I should let you go.”

“I’d at least like to know what you think of our collaboration, Will.”

The empath found himself smiling, glad to keep the man on the phone a bit longer. He settled at his table, forking into the omelet. He chewed thoughtfully, Hannibal’s breathing in his ear. “It’s delicious.”

“Wonderful.” He could hear the smile in Hannibal’s voice. “Though it really would be better with fresh chives.”

“It would be better if you stopped complaining about my spice rack.” Will forked another bite of creamy eggs into his mouth.

“They’re herbs, not a spice.” Hannibal took a breath, recalibrating. “How is Buster’s paw? Has he let it mend?”

“Took the cone off him yesterday.”

“…cone?”

“Cone…you know, Elizabethan collar?”

There was an odd little noise, as if Hannibal had suppressed a cough. “I’ll assume you’re not costuming your pets.”

“It’s a plastic cone, you put it around the dog’s neck so it can’t lick its wounds or tear at its bandages.”

Hannibal hummed. “You deny his instincts.”

“For his own good.” Will frowned as he chewed.

“Is it?” Will could picture the tilt in Hannibal’s head. “I don’t believe I’ve ever seen a wolf in a plastic cone, and yet they thrive.”

“Buster’s not a wolf, he’s a dog.”

“Ah yes, domesticated, broken of his instincts. Tell me, Will, do you think it was his domestication that drove him to tear his nail chasing prey, or perhaps an example that instincts are stronger than forced expectations?”

Will shoved a hunk of omelet in his mouth, making sure to chew at the phone. “So… what? Buster’s really a wolf in fat terrier clothing?”

Buster flopped by Will’s foot, huffing. The empath bent to rub an ear. “Sorry, buddy.”

“Buster can admit he enjoys the chase and the kill. He’s not content to sit on your porch and be a good boy.”

“Not all of the dogs hunt – Winston, Harley…”

“No, not everyone is cut out for it, I imagine.” That soft creak again, Will knew that noise… “But I admire those who don’t feel the need to pretend when the hunt is in their blood.”

“I’m done with my omelet,” Will announced, slightly too loud into the phone. “I, uh, I should let you go.”

“Do you want to?”

“Do I want to what?”

“Let me go.”

Will took his plates to the sink, sitting them next to the pot and pan. The remnants of an unsatisfying dinner next to the remnants of a good one. “I should.”

“You have an interesting talent for responding to questions without answering them.”

Will snorted. “You have that talent too.”

“Another way we are alike.”

“Identically different.” He knew the words should draw revulsion from him, but they warmed his core. Will glanced at the clock and cringed. “Shit, it’s nearly 11, I bet you have to get to bed.”

“I’m already in bed, as luck would have it.”

The noise.

The little creaking sounds were the sounds of a bedframe. Immediately Will pictured Hannibal luxuriating on a bed of pillows, talking him through the basics of omelet making. Will let his mind wander. The first image he drew was lurid, more fantasy than fact. He pictured Hannibal in satin pajamas, blood red. The shirt would be open, pooling around his torso as if he’d bled out in the sheets.

Will huffed at himself. Tasteless.

Dr. Lecter wouldn’t do anything as obvious as satin. There was taste to consider, and quality. Will’s mind dashed the image and rebuilt it. Fine cotton pajama pants, something neatly tailored, exquisitely soft, and breathable. Perhaps a pinstripe pattern, but nothing more ostentatious than that. His hair would be clean, no harsh gel. Will could picture the exact angle it would fall across his forehead. A matching top would be too common for Hannibal. No…something luxurious, but still befitting a bed. A sweater, perhaps. One he’d remove and fold neatly before slipping beneath the covers.

“Will?”

“*Uh,* sorry, Buster tried to steal a scrap…bad Buster! No!” Buster tilted his head in offense before trotting into the other room. Will sighed, he’d have to let the little shit sleep on his bed tonight or he’d find something torn up in the morning.

“Ah, I was saying my only morning appointment is swimming at 5am, nothing too terribly pressing.”

“Swimming.” Wet muscles. Droplets of water trailing over tanned skin. Hannibal would never wear bulky trunks which meant he’d be encased in-

“Is it surprising to you that I swim regularly?” Hannibal’s voice broke through Will’s fog, just as he was trying to decide a speedo versus fitted swim shorts. He knew, distantly, that the doctor swam. He’d read the report detailing Brown’s attempt on him. But somehow it never occurred to Will that the man swam regularly. “It’s excellent cardiovascular exercise. I try to swim three miles four times a week I find-”

“Three miles?”

There was a noise, something akin to an annoyed hiss. “Why does this surprise you?”

“Just, that’s…you’re fit.” Will redrew the lines of Hannibal’s wet body in his head, slimming the legs, broadening the chest.

A sniff. A very annoyed sniff. “I do try to stay in shape.”

“You’d have to you’re-”

The Ripper. Why couldn’t he say it?

“I’m what?”

“Too good a chef not to work out. You’d weigh 300 lbs.”

Hannibal hummed, mollified. “Yes, well, I suppose I’ll see you Thursday.”

“Yeah,” Will smiled. “Unless you need me to do any more home repairs.”

“Indeed,” Hannibal’s voice had dropped an octave, it was practically a purr. “Or you find yourself in need of any further cooking instructions.”

“Goodnight, Hannibal.”

“Sleep well, Will.”

Will hung up the phone and stared at nothing. He wasn’t going to sleep well. His skin was tingling, his breath was fast and shallow, sleep wouldn’t reach him for quite some time… unless.

Idly, Will palmed his crotch, not surprised to find himself half-hard and filling rapidly.

I admire those who don’t feel the need to pretend when the hunt is in their blood.

Will wet his lips, adjusting his grip enough to make him swallow hard. He wouldn’t pretend, not for the rest of the night.

Chapter End Notes

Incidentally, the whisk trick does work on snow-clumped dog fur...also...don't ever use that whisk to cook again.

Next Up:
The games continue as do the cooking lessons and the repairs.

Vigorous Rubbing

Chapter Summary

Will teaches Hannibal the basics of plaster repair. Hannibal teaches Will how to poach pears.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will swirled a forkful of…someone in an acidic red sauce and popped it in his mouth. The flavors burst on his tongue, tart and smooth all at once. He could feel Hannibal watching him chew. It should have been weird. Will should have hated that type of scrutiny, especially from a killer.

Instead, Will lifted his chin subtly, just enough to give Hannibal a clear view of his throat as he swallowed. It was an obvious enticement, and the thought of it made his chest burn, the feeling bright and forbidden. Will lowered his chin. He was doing this for the FBI… for Abigail.

If he kept telling himself that, maybe it would be true.

“Delicious.”

Hannibal didn’t smile outright, instead, he inhaled deeply, puffing his chest and lifting his chin in absolute pleasure at Will’s words. “Thank you. It was the least I could do after all the help you’ve given me.”

It was true, in the last two weeks, Will had answered Hannibal’s call nearly 10 times. It seemed there was always something breaking at the good doctor’s home. Last Monday, Will had swung by after work to fix a squeaky cabinet door. Wednesday, Will saved Hannibal from a dripping bathroom sink. Friday, there had been a problem with the garage door opener that was solved by replacing batteries. Sunday, Will had shown Hannibal how to fix a fallen tile in his shower. Tuesday, Will helped Hannibal replaced a cracked oven door.

That one had surprised him. Will didn’t think Hannibal would break his precious kitchen if he could help it.

Still, it was getting pretty clear Hannibal was running out of plausible home repair disasters. Tonight’s mishap was a hole in the drywall. A hole that Will had resisted pointing out was in the exact shape of the bust sitting below it on the hallway table. Hannibal had looked so pleased with himself, telling Will that he knew the plaster would have to dry for at least a few hours, and perhaps Will could stay for dinner while it dried?

Will had nodded, biting his lip and turning the quick-dry plaster so that the label was facing the wall. The plaster would dry in 30 minutes, but it seemed a shame to turn down a chance to spend more time with Hannibal.

In truth, Will had been thrilled with the excuse. He, too, was running out of reasons to call Hannibal. It seemed, after Hannibal's little cooking lesson Will had utterly lost the ability to feed himself. So far this week, Will had burned rice, ruined his frozen pizza, lost his recipe for steak tips (the one he'd had memorized since he was 12), and forgotten how to make an omelet. He'd call Hannibal, looking at a clean counter and describe some sort of culinary disaster that he'd spent most of the day dreaming up. Hannibal would fret lightly at the state of Will's kitchen before asking Will what ingredients they had to work with.

If Hannibal noticed that Will suddenly had a stocked fridge and fresh herbs, he didn't mention it. Will would make his dinner with Hannibal in his ear, smiling goofily as Hannibal explained what the hell he meant when he told Will to brunoise the peppers. When the meal was finished, they would chat as Will ate, Hannibal amusing him with little bits of his day or inquiring after the dogs.

It was harmless, really. Nothing had happened that would technically compromise the investigation. Will wouldn't allow that.

"Will?"

Will looked up, he had been running his fork through the sauce, the person on his plate long consumed. "Sorry?"

"Do we have time for dessert, or do you think your plaster has dried?"

Will made a show of checking his watch. The plaster would have been ready for sanding an hour ago. "Probably needs to dry a bit more."

Hannibal grinned, eyes warming as they narrowed. "I'll poach the pears."

Will sat at Hannibal's table for 30 seconds before following, softly stepping into the kitchen and approaching the kitchen island. Hannibal looked up. "Did you need more wine?"

"Can you show me?"

Hannibal lofted a brow. "You know where the wine is."

Will rolled his eyes. "How to poach a pear."

Hannibal looked up, the corners of his mouth lifting just slightly as he regarded Will. "I suppose a cooking lesson in a proper kitchen would help limit our nightly calls."

Something soured in Will's mouth at that. He didn't like the idea of this ending. He was so used to eating dinner with Hannibal now, used to meandering around his house, Hannibal murmuring in his ear, never-ending the call until Hannibal told him it was late, and they should go to sleep.

“Will?”

“What?”

“You’re frowning at the pears.”

“Just…thinking.” But that was the problem — he wasn’t thinking. He was imagining a whole life, a life where he didn’t need the phone to have Hannibal in his home, in his bed at night. A life where he fixed the house and Hannibal fixed the meals—

Abigail Hobbs. Beverly.

This wasn’t a date; it was a fact-finding mission. He had been charged with finding incriminating evidence on Hannibal Lecter, who was undoubtedly a serial killer.

“Would you bring the pears to me, please?” Hannibal stepped back, making room for Will in front of the flame on the stove. Will stepped into it holding the bowl of pears, an offering to the man before him.

“We need to pick two firm pears,” Hannibal reached around Will, long fingers squeezing and moving the fruit until he uncovered two that were suitable. “These should do.”

Will’s eyes felt heavy, he didn’t move to leave the circle of Hannibal’s arms. He could feel himself wavering, wanting to lean back. A hand wrapped around his, helping him set the pears aside. He blinked as Hannibal pressed a fruit into his hand, he found himself wanting to bite.

“These need to be peeled,” Hannibal offered Will a paring knife. He stepped away and Will felt his absence keenly. He slipped the knife into the skin of the first pear, trying his best to leave as much flesh as possible.

He could feel Hannibal’s eyes on him, tracking the blade as Will worked.

“You’re gonna make me cut myself.” Will handed Hannibal one peeled pear and started on the next.

“You seem quite handy with a knife, one of your many skills it seems.”

“I’m no surgeon.” *Or serial killer*.

“Skills can be learned, refined.”

Will hummed. “That mean you want me to teach you how to fix the drywall yourself?”

“I wouldn’t be opposed to it.” Hannibal smiled. “I find myself craving your tutelage.”

Will let the blade work, glancing up at Hannibal. “Where’s the fun in that?”

Hannibal’s head tilted, eyes flicking to watch Will’s hands. “You’re content to be my handyman?”

“If you’re content to be my personal chef.”

“I’m not your personal chef. This is the first meal you’ve allowed me to prepare for you in some time.”

“I call you all the time for help.” Will returned his focus to the pear, how easy it was, how viscerally satisfying, to slice into its flesh.

“That makes me your cooking tech support, doesn’t it?”

Will lifted a shoulder in a halfhearted shrug. “That’s personal.”

“I suppose.” Hannibal’s voice was suddenly very close, Will forced himself to be still when the doctor’s breath wrapped around his earlobe. “But there are far more personal options.”

There was a base impulse, somewhere in the back of his skull, screaming at Will to turn, to fall into the man right behind him. Instead, he cleared his throat stepping to the side. Hannibal didn’t stop his movements. Will handed over the last pear, watching Hannibal drop them in a simmering pot. “What’s in the pot?”

“Campbell’s beef and barley soup.”

Will grinned. “Thought it smelled familiar.”

Hannibal snorted. “A mixture of red wine, cardamom pods, saffron, and sugar.”

“How long will it take to finish?”

“Thirty minutes.”

“Want to learn how to sand drywall?”

Hannibal tilted his head, gesturing to the hallway. “If you’re offering.”

Will had to admit, subtly was not one of Hannibal’s finer skills. The man was breathing softly in his ear, chin perched just a hair over Will’s shoulder as he ran the sandpaper over the patch.

“Is it optimal to do this against the grain or with the grain?” Will rolled his eyes fondly. Hannibal asked a banal question every 15-20 seconds, anything to justify him practically hanging off Will’s back.

“You just rub it back and forth.”

“Vigorous rubbing, I see.” Will knew the skin on his neck was prickling, knew Hannibal could probably scent the changes. He rubbed harder, focusing on getting the drywall flat with the surface of the wall. “And after a vigorous rubbing, what do we do?”

“Clean up.” Will grinned when he felt an amused puff of air against his neck. “Plaster can stain your clothes.”

“I’d hate to envision you walking around with conspicuous white stains all over your new shirt.” Hannibal’s voice echoed in Will’s skull filling it so full he no longer heard the screams from cases long gone. “Especially if I were the cause of those white stains.”

“New shirt?” Will shifted his shoulder, just enough that it pressed against the center of Hannibal’s chest. The doctor didn’t move. Hannibal had finally noticed the tag he’d left on the new forest green button-down — nicer than his usual clothes but not so nice it would arouse suspicion. “W-what do you mean? This isn’t new.”

Will ducked his head, redoubled his sanding, his face flushing red as he hunched his shoulders. He’d wanted Hannibal to see the tag, wanted to bait the great Doctor Lecter into thinking he was making an effort to look nice for him.

Only…he was making the effort, wasn't he? Will had spent time on his hair. He’d picked out the green shirt because he thought the color would please Hannibal. When did these efforts stop being for the investigation and start being for the pure pleasure of having Hannibal admire him? Will wasn’t sure anymore.

“*Ah*, my mistake, I suppose I’ve just never seen that shirt before,” Hannibal murmured. Will felt the barest brush of fingers by his collar and realized the tag was being tucked down subtly. A rush of heat swelled Will’s chest at the thought. “It suits you, Will.”

“Thanks.” Will’s voice was a rasp. His throat clicked when he swallowed. The air hung between them, only the sounds of sanding scratching at the silence.

“Are you nearly done? The pears should be ready soon.”

Will nodded. “If you plate them, I’ll wash up and meet you in the dining room.”

Hannibal was gone, and the hallway immediately seeming colder and cavernous. Will finished the job, trying to remember the names of all the Ripper victims to keep from following Hannibal into the kitchen.

Will used a fork to slice through the pears, made tender and pliable in the saffron-scented sauce. He dragged his bit of flesh through the red wine reduction, leaving bloody trails along his plate. “Will you need me to help you paint?”

“I was thinking of redoing the hallway, changing one’s environment is as healthy as changing one’s outlook.”

“It can also be a disaster.”

Hannibal smiled, his teeth peeking from behind full lips. “Isn’t that part of the fun?”

It was. Will shook his head, focusing on the pear speared on his fork. “What colors were you thinking?”

“Forest green is a very becoming color.” Hannibal chewed thoughtfully on a bite of pear. “One that I think would fit in beautifully with my current décor.”

Will smiled, gripping his fork tight so he wouldn’t be tempted to take Hannibal’s hand. The pear tasted sweet in his mouth.

Chapter End Notes

Next Up:
Will has an unexpected dinner guest, and did you know windows are rife with sex puns?

Double Hung

Chapter Summary

Will gets a kiss...but is it from the right person?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Huh." Will examined the tracks on the window in Hannibal's bedroom. Hannibal had mentioned last night as he talked Will through braising a beef shank that his bedroom window was stuck. Will had, of course, told the doctor he'd be over in the morning. It meant canceling a meeting with Price and Zeller, but that was hardly a loss.

Hannibal had met him at the door in a robe, hair tousled along his eyes and chin just slightly scruffy. The sight had stopped Will cold. Perfect doctor Lecter had to shave and brush his hair like the rest of humanity. It seemed almost funny to think that Hannibal had to do anything so banal as basic grooming, Will had always assumed the doctor had decided to be clean-shaven and simply stopped growing hair on his chin. When faced with evidence to the contrary, Will wondered what that scruff would feel like against his neck, rubbing behind his ear, nuzzling along his thighs. It took him a minute to realize Hannibal was talking, asking Will to follow him upstairs to the window that was causing the problem.

He had hoped Hannibal would leave him alone, let Will work on his project, and settle his mind. But when had Hannibal ever considered Will's comfort or mental health when making decisions. Now, Hannibal sat casually on the bed behind Will, who was definitely not staring at the elegant reflection in the windowpane. The blue robe pooled around matching cotton navy sleep pants and a cream sweater. Every inch of Hannibal looked like a tactile pleasure, and Will felt his fingers itching with the knowledge.

Will flexed those fingers and tapped the window instead, clearing his throat. "Are these original to the house?"

"I believe so, why?"

"They're single hung." Will pointed at the top sash of the window. "These don't move. Most modern windows are double hung, so both pieces can move up or down."

Hannibal reclined to his headboard, long legs stretching before him to cross at surprisingly delicate ankles. Will could see it was an invitation, and maddeningly he wanted to accept. "Would you prefer double hung?"

Will's face flushed hot. God, why did he even give Hannibal the opening? "T-*uh*, this is fine… Might be easier to fix."

“Nice of you not to hold it against me.” Will knew in his bones Hannibal was smiling, but he kept his head down. If he dared look at that mischievous smirk, he might do something colossally stupid, like crawl onto that nice big bed behind him.

Instead, Will focused on getting the bottom sash loose from the track so he could inspect it. As Will pulled the large panes of glass free, he heard Hannibal shift. “Are you double hung, Will?”

Biting back a laugh, Will focused on putting the window carefully on the ground. “Curious about my windows, Dr. Lecter?”

“I suppose I am.”

Will ran a finger along the track, easily locating the section of bent metal Hannibal must have smashed in on itself last night. “Found the problem.”

“What happened?” Hannibal leaned forward, a picture of utter innocence.

“Some idiot must have bent the track.” Will looked up. “Were you aggressively opening windows recently?”

Hannibal sank back onto his pillows. “Not very recently, no.”

Will tilted his head. “You wouldn’t have a pry bar, would you?”

Hannibal offered Will an unimpressed expression. Will sighed. “A hammer?”

“That, I have.”

“Great, you bring me the hammer, I’ll straighten you out.” Will heard it the second it left his lips, but there was nothing to be done about it now.

“Not too straight, I hope.”

“Get the damn hammer, Hannibal.”

Will ducked his head to grin at his shoes. He heard the bed squeak as Hannibal rose. “Will you stay for breakfast?”

Yes.

Christ, he really wanted to, but… “I already canceled on Price and Zeller this morning, I can’t cancel on Jack or my classes.”

Hannibal nodded in acquiescence. “Coffee for your drive, then?”

“That would be fantastic, thanks.”

“I’ll make it for you while you reassemble my window.”

Will waited for Hannibal to reach the doorway.

“Oh, Hannibal?”

The doctor stepped back into the room, a graceful arc to his body. “Hmmm?”

“Just so you know, I am double hung.”

Hannibal’s grin was full of teeth — so was Will’s.

When the window was solidly on its track and opening beautifully, the scent of coffee found Will. He followed the scent to the kitchen, where he found Hannibal, still in his robe bustling about the stove.

Will’s mind tugged him away, to a possibility. Coming down those stairs in the morning, sleep mussed and frowning at the cold air, he’d find Hannibal in the kitchen, robe flaring behind him as he bustled through making breakfast. Will would pad up behind him softly, though Hannibal would hear him, the doctor would pretend to be none the wiser as the empath grabbed him from behind. Will’s hands would creep under that cream sweater, seeking warm skin, he’d nuzzle into the join of Hannibal’s neck, nose rubbing on his doctor’s stubble. Hannibal would complain about cold hands and unkempt beards, but lean into each touch.

Will could imagine living out the same morning forever, thousands of nuzzles, the smell of coffee, and the salt of Hannibal’s skin…

“Will?”

He blinked, flushing red all over when he realized Hannibal was staring at him. “Sorry.”

“Where did you go?”

Abigail Hobbs. Beverly Katz. Will made himself think of the reports, the blood loss, the carnage. It didn’t seem as horrifying as it once did.

“Nowhere good,” Will muttered.

Hannibal was upon him before he realized it. Warm hands wrapping around Will’s back and elbow, as they guided him to a stool, sat by the island.

“I should not have let you come so early. Your sleep patterns are erratic enough without my adding to your undue stress.” He really did sound sorry about that. It was almost funny — the Chesapeake Ripper worried Will wasn’t sleeping well.

“I came because I wanted to.” The truth in that statement hung heavy on Will’s shoulders. He had wanted to — badly. He’d been waiting for a call all day, eager for another trivial summons to Hannibal’s home.

Hannibal’s eyes warmed. He handed Will a teak mug with a sealed lid. “Since you won’t allow me to feed you a proper breakfast, I hope this will do.”

Will brought the mug to his nose, the coffee smelled potent. He took a sip. “Is this Turkish coffee?”

Hannibal’s broad grin was reward enough. “It is.”

“Delicious.” Will glanced down to Hannibal’s hands, resting serenely on the counter. The doctor had rolled up his sleeves to perform some form of caffeine-related alchemy on the stove, and Will noticed the red lines that ran a stark trail along his wrists.

Before he could think better of it, Will put down the mug and grabbed Hannibal’s wrist with a coffee-warmed hand. He ran a thumb over the scar, memorizing the way the flesh puckered beneath the pad of his thumb.

“Do you regret your mark?” Hannibal’s wrist flexed in Will’s grip, long fingers tracing a ghost of his scar along Will’s wrist.

“They’re not my marks.” He rubbed the line of red flesh again. A wrist cutting and a Bible reference; the idea that Matthew’s design was so banal made Will’s scalp itch. He could almost feel the antlers just below his hair, poking, seeking exodus.

“Mr. Brown was your design, surely, even if you disagreed with his methods.”

“I’ve learned my lesson; I won’t rely on a subcontractor ever again.”

“I find having a reliable handyman is better than farming out work,” Hannibal smiled, his fingers still tracing Will’s wrist. He tilted his head slightly. “I suspect that neither of us have left the marks we wanted to leave on each other.”

Will raised an eyebrow. “Wanted to scar more than my psyche, did you?”

Hannibal’s smile grew teeth. “You told me once you want to kill me with your hands. Is that still how you’d like to leave your marks, Will?”

“Yes.” Will’s voice shook. He could see his hand tightening around Hannibal’s throat in his mind, could feel the doctor’s breath stopping, the tendons flexing. But Hannibal wouldn’t struggle, his mind supplied, the man would merely flex into the grip, ensuring Will had enough pressure to cut off his oxygen. Will’s traitor hands would loosen around Hannibal’s throat, then, petting down a furred chest to rub at Hannibal’s nipples. He could see his nails digging into Hannibal’s back as the doctor thrust into him, drawing blood, leaving more marks. Joined hands, fight and pressing, tearing at clothes instead of flesh. Will cleared his throat, forcing himself to meet Hannibal’s eyes. “How would you choose to leave your marks, Doctor Lecter, if not on my mind?”

“While leaving an indelible mark on your brain is appealing, I must admit as you chose hands…I would choose teeth.” Will exhaled, sharp and sudden, like he’d been punched. Hannibal would bite him, teeth ripping into his flesh and yanking free his throat. But the image in his mind began to soften. That wasn’t quite right, he peered harder into Hannibal’s design. This time he saw those same teeth, but no tearing of flesh, Will would moan, arching between the doctor’s teeth as he was bitten, encouraging bruises on his neck. Hannibal would

bite Will's shoulder as he shuddered beneath the empath, then carefully run his teeth along Will's cock….

"Will? You're very flushed." Hannibal's eyes danced. He inhaled deeply as he ran a concerned hand over Will's forehead. "Are you sure you shouldn't stay?"

Will thought about it. He thought about digging his nails into Matthew Brown's scar and leaving one of his own as he dragged Hannibal back up to the bedroom. "I know I shouldn't stay."

"Would you accept a dinner invitation?" Hannibal invited Will at every opportunity. Will always demurred. At first, he had wanted to string the lure, keep Hannibal chasing him. Now, Will found himself looking at Hannibal's own lure of food and company and feeling his teeth aching to bite.

With a sigh, Will tried to affect ire he really didn't feel. "Wouldn't Alana be surprised if I showed up to dinner?"

Hannibal raised an eyebrow. "I thought we'd agreed no more subcontractors."

Will's mouth gaped just a bit, his heart rate increasing. "Meaning what? You're done?"

"Alana and I sought comfort from each other." Hannibal turned, moving back to a pan with scrambled eggs and sausage. He portioned some onto a plate, the rest he deposited in a Tupperware container. "Sex after a funeral, so to speak."

"And what did you lose?" Will rasped.

Hannibal looked up briefly from his task.

"Hope." A smile played faintly over Hannibal's mouth. "But there may have been a resurrection."

"Finally found your faith in God?"

"My faith in God's cruelty remains unchallenged," Hannibal sealed the container. "I believe I've finally found something worthy of worship, though."

Hannibal held out the dish, condensation forming on the lid. "If you will not accept my company, perhaps you will accept my food. It's just a protein scramble, you seemed to like the last one."

Will stared at the Tupperware, wondering who was in it. He should take it, give it to Price. The damn container had Hannibal's fingerprints all over it. It would at least be enough for a warrant. But something about that idea sat cold and heavy in the pit of Will's stomach. If it was a victim, if Will turned the evidence over, this stopped. "Sure you can spare this?"

"I find my need to feed you has become overwhelming," Hannibal said, smiling. "Even if I'm only instructing you on the phone."

“Thank you.” Will took the container, careful to grab where he’d be least likely to destroy fingerprint evidence. Hannibal’s mouth thinned as he watched, but he released the container willingly. Will stepped back, hovering in the threshold of the kitchen, breakfast in his hands, and the man he wanted to share it with only steps away. “I do want to come back to dinner, you know.”

Hannibal’s mouth softened slightly. “I know.”

“I’m just, I’ve gotta work through some *uh* cases.”

“I eagerly await their resolution, then.”

So did Will. He swallowed.

“I…should go.”

“I know you think you should,” Will hated the defeated tone he heard.

“Can I call you tonight, maybe get your opinion on a fish recipe?”

Hannibal’s eyes grew warm. He nodded. “Safe travels, Will.”

“Thanks.”

Will ran to his car and sped toward Quantico. When he crossed into Virginia, he pulled over at a rest stop and stared at the protein scramble. He grabbed it on impulse, wiping the container against his coat. Once any and all print evidence would be useless, Will popped open the lid and smelled the food.

Delicious, as always.

Using his hands, Will wolfed down Hannibal’s offering. The sausage bursting on his tongue as he bit into it, the perfect complement to the soft eggs. When he was done, Will licked his hand, chasing any trace of Hannibal with his tongue.

He panted, holding the empty container in a dreary parking lot. This wasn’t meant to be eaten next to an 18-wheeler and a dog rest area with biodegradable poop bags lining the fence. This meal was meant to be savored, lying in a bed, smiling as Hannibal dangled forkfuls of it over Will’s lips. Maybe just sitting in the kitchen, shoulders touching as they quietly prepared for the day ahead.

Will thought of Abigail, of Bev, of poor Miriam Lass, but he couldn’t find the righteous anger anymore. The deaths were sad, possibly preventable if he and Hannibal would just stop playing this damn game.

With a sigh, Will grabbed his cell, scrolling through his contacts.

“Jack? It’s Will. I’ve got news.”

“Hi boys!” Will waded through a sea of wagging tails, laden with grocery bags. He’d stopped by the organic market on his way home, picked up a bottle of wine. He felt lighter, now that it was done, free from the claws of his indecision.

Jack had actually laughed when Will told him. Clapped him on the back and honest-to-god guffawed.

“You’re sure?” Jack had glared over folded hands, somehow looming even when he was seated at this desk.

Will swallowed, he could still taste the sausage in the backs of his teeth. “I am.”

“Absolutely sure?”

“Do you think I would come to you like this if I wasn’t fucking positive?”

Jack leaned back, defeated. “You’re fucking kidding me, Will.”

“He’s not the Ripper, Jack.”

“How in the hell did we get here, Will?”

“I set out to lure Hannibal, but I think I lured myself.”

It was the truest thing Will had said in ages.

“What the hell does that mean?”

“I was so set on him being the Ripper, on being right, on proving that I was wronged…”

...That I didn’t stop to wonder if he had a point.

“That you ignored the evidence?”

I will now.

Will looked up, shrugging. “Something like that.”

“But what about all the weird shit? The coincidences, the profile…?”

“There’s no law against being weird. Do you know how many former Hopkins surgeons are on the opera board in Baltimore, Jack?”

“But-”

“Hell, Jack, for a time, I fit the profile…” Better than he had let himself believe, as it turned out… “And you’ll admit you got that one wrong, won’t you?”

Jack’s shoulders hunched; he dropped his eyes. That was enough. Will knew a hooked fish when he saw one.

“So, if it’s not Hannibal,” Will smiled to himself noting that Jack had returned to calling Hannibal by his first name instead of the more impersonal ‘Lecter’. “Then, where does that leave us?”

“Let me have the weekend with the files. Look at it with a clear head.”

And figure out a new person to frame, since Chilton wouldn’t hold water anymore. Maybe he and Hannibal could discuss it together.

I’m going to want a new report by Monday.”

Will nodded. The silence stretched for a moment, Jack studying Will. Then, the older man started to shake. The shaking turned to guffaws. Will stared wide-eyed at Jack as the man cackled.

"Jack?”

The man wiped his eyes, still chuckling. “You know the worst part, Will? I’m relieved I can start going back to the dinner parties.”

Will grinned. “It’s really good food, isn’t it?”

Jack laughed again.

Will pulled the Ripper files out of his bag. He needed a plausible scapegoat, one that had all the trappings of Hannibal. It wasn’t the easiest task to accomplish, but if his plans went well this evening, he’d get some help while he was choosing.

Stretching his neck until the bones popped, Will relaxed his shoulders before fishing his phone out of his pocket. He found himself humming as he waited for the phone to connect, absently scratching Winston’s ear.

“Good evening, Will.” Hannibal’s voice was nearly a purr, pleased and rumbling as it filled Will’s ear. “What’s on the menu this evening?”

“You wouldn’t possibly know the best way to cook a smallmouth bass, would you?” Will grinned into the phone, pan-frying was the best way, with fresh greens. He’d been making the dish since his daddy had let him near the stove. Still, Will was ready to follow Hannibal through a new recipe.

He was willing to follow Hannibal through more than just culinary experiments, apparently.

“I’m familiar with a few recipes for largemouth bass.” Will could practically hear Hannibal rifling through recipes in his memory palace. “Could you perhaps tell me how smallmouth bass differs from it?”

“Sure.” Will grinned into the phone. “You see, the mouth is smaller… ”

Silence stretched over the phone and Will pictured Hannibal's moue of annoyance. "Will?"

"Yes?"

"Do you want my help or do you want to make jokes?"

"Actually," Will swallowed. "What I wanted was for you to-"

Come over.

Come over now.

"Will?"

Will took a deep breath, he was right on the edge, he just had to let himself fall. "I, *uh*, I was thinking maybe you could — if you're not busy — maybe you could join-"

The knock at the door startled Will into dropping the phone.

"Will?"

Will retrieved his cell from the floor, muttering *hold on*, tucking the phone into his breast pocket before stomping to his door. He glared as he swung it open, ready to send Jack and his murders packing. He started when he saw Alana's lovely face, eyes brimming with tears.

"Alana?" Not the brightest thing he'd ever said, but Will was rather thrown when the woman in question threw her arms around his neck, hugging him tightly.

"You were right," she whispered. Will felt something sharp and sour pool in his gut.

"What?" He stepped back, ushering Alana in past the dogs and settling her on his favorite chair.

"Hannibal — something's wrong with him. I don't know why I- god, I was so blind." She frowned, tears spilling now.

"What did you see?" Will's mind raced. He'd have to make it quick, but what if she'd told someone she was coming here? Did she come straight from Hannibal's? If he hid the body, they might still look at Hannibal because he was the last person to see her alive—

Will fell on his ass, Buster scrabbling to get out of the way and Winston nosing at him. It had been less than ten seconds and he was already weighing whether or not it was worth dismembering her body. What the fuck had he become?

I admire those who don't feel the need to pretend when the hunt is in their blood.

Hannibal's words rang through his skull. He'd worked so hard, fought so long and what had it gotten him? A job he hated, a dead daughter and a dead friend. Would it really be

worse to lean in, to follow the instincts that he kept clenched in the back of his jaw? Or would it be wonderful?

"Will?" Alana was peering at him.

"Just settling down," He looped an arm around Winston, ruffled Harley's fur. He was unthreatening, dog-loving Will Graham, the perfect man to put Alana at ease while he decided what needed to be done. He made his tone light, slightly disinterested. "What's up with Hannibal?"

"He asked me to go to his place, he wanted to talk," Alana took a deep breath, her shoulders stiffening. "I thought about what you said…how controlled he is. How…detached. It's like he's performing emotions, not actually-"

"What did he want to talk about?" Alana frowned at Will, who picked up Buster and rubbed his belly, trying not to look too eager.

"He thought we should redefine our relationship."

Will kept his face down, his smile pointed at Buster. "He broke up with you."

"Yes." Alana slumped forward. "Honestly, it was a relief."

Will did look up then, eyes sharp. "So, he broke up with you and now you're ready to admit he's the Ripper?"

Alana scoffed. Winston wandered over to her and rested his snout on her knee. She sank her fingers into his golden fur, stroking softly.

"It's more than hurt feelings, Will. I've been thinking about it. I was his alibi, I-" Her bottom lip trembled. "When he spoke to me it was so warm, the tone was right, all the gestures, but there was something in his eyes…I don't think he ever cared about me at all."

"Alana-"

"And if he didn't, if I was just an alibi, then you were right, I've helped him…I've let him…how many people has he hurt because of me?"

Not nearly as many as he did to get to me.

Will frowned at himself. It wouldn't do to get jealous over a game he'd won. He looked up at Alana, letting her uncertainty and misery wash over him. He took it, reformed it until a perfect reflection of her turmoil sat on his face.

"I'm so sorry, Alana." Will let his voice crack a little, just a peek at the emotions beneath the surface to draw her in. "He's a total bastard."

"He is." She reached out, her hand stroking through his curls. He wondered if she even realized she was petting him like Winston. "You tried to warn me, you never gave up trying to save people…Is that what you're doing now? Is that why-"

“I’ve been trying to get enough evidence.” It had been the truth, at some point. He had enough, or he would if he’d just…

“Jack told me last week, some plan where you pretend you’re in love with him?”

“No, not-”

She snorted. “Jack said you were trying to seduce him.”

“I, it didn’t start out that way.”

“I’m sorry, Will. I’m sorry you’ve been forced to do that. I’m sorry I didn’t believe you sooner. I’m sorry I…you’re were right and I should have, I should have trusted my instincts about you.” Alana leaned forward and pressed their lips together.

She was still very kissable — soft lips, smooth skin, beautiful lashes fanned across pale cheeks. She sighed into his mouth, angle shifting just enough to make them fit together. It was a good kiss.

Will’s mind raced. A good kiss that would lead to good sex, and good sex that would lead to a good wedding — Alana in white, Will tugging at the collar of a rented tux and faintly grimacing in all the pictures. Freddie Lounds would show up, taking pictures like she was their wedding photographer, printing them under the headline Ripper Girlfriend Marries Fed Who Caught Her Man. They’d settle into a cute little house, with room for the dogs and in a year or two they’d have a daughter. Will could see her now, a pretty blue-eyed girl with brown curls and freckles on her nose.

Will would be a good dad. He’d hide the pictures of grizzly murders from his family. He’d clean his internet history whenever he searched for the latest psychological profiles of Hannibal Lecter online. He’d play chase games with his daughter and do his best not to picture red eyes and high cheekbones when he fucked his wife. It would be a good, normal life.

Polite.

And in 18 years, Will would watch his daughter get ready to leave for college. He’d know, in his bones that once she drove away he’d be trapped in this good little house with nothing to focus on but the Lithuanian accent calling for him in his head. There’d be nothing to do then, but to walk into the kitchen and slit his wife and daughter’s pretty little throats and finish breakfast. They’d probably put him near Hannibal’s cell if he cooperated with the investigation.

A sour flavor pooled at the back of Will’s tongue.

He pulled back. When Alana opened her eyes, Will offered a half-hearted laugh. “Ever notice we only do that when one of us is unstable?”

“Will-”

“Alana, I need to tell you something,” Will licked his lips, the taste of her started to turn his stomach, it felt like betrayal on his tongue. “Hannibal’s not the Ripper.”

“What?” She scrunched her brow, mouth parting to argue.

Will held up a hand. “I- I wanted it to be true. You have no idea how much I did.”

“No…no, I can see it now, you were right about ever-”

“The evidence isn’t there.”

“The profile-”

“The one I made?” He held up his hands in a hapless shrug. “The one that I kept tailoring until it perfectly fit Hannibal?”

Alana shook her head, stubborn to the core now that the blinders were off. “No…the profile was right.”

“You didn’t think so.”

“I was…I didn’t see it, but now that I do-” She looked so confused. “Everything you kept adding to it. It fits so perfectly.”

“Confirmation bias.” Will let his shoulders fall, hopefully, he looked ashamed. “I picked out all the evidence that fit the finding I wanted.”

“But why would you want-”

“I don’t like being psychoanalyzed. I don’t like having someone pick over everything I do.” Will sneered. “He was always pushing trying so hard to be close, to pick apart my mind.”

“No.” Alana firmed her mouth. “No…this isn’t right. There’s something wrong, Will.”

“There’s no evidence, there’s not a scrap of fiber or even a witness…Miriam didn’t identify him.”

“There are ways to get around that, if he used the right combination of drugs, he could have theoretically-”

“How much time would that have taken?”

“What?”

“To brainwash Miriam Lass?”

She frowned again, but Will could see the small cracks forming at the edge of her stubborn expression. “Weeks? Months?”

“OK, and while he’s doing that, he’s also killing, dismembering, and elaborately reassembling people.”

“…yes.”

“While working full time?”

“H-he could have…” Alana’s mouth drew into a little moue as she tried to find an explanation.

“Just, look at the timeline, Alana,” Will made his voice soft, the same voice he used when he had to lure a skittish dog to his car. “When I really thought about the timeline, it doesn’t pan out.”

“He could have-”

“He kills and displays people, brainwashes an FBI trainee, sees patients during business hours, attends the opera regularly, is at society brunches and cocktail parties…” Will scoffed. He’d actually tried to work out the timeline several times, the only explanations that worked were he had some type of kill room in his home or an industrial freezer to preserve bodies for weeks while he worked. “It’s amazing he had time to sleep with you with all that going on.”

“It’s him,” she didn’t sound convinced anymore. “It’s just a feeling, I know it in my gut.”

He looked up, one more push and she’d shatter. “Like you knew about me?”

“Will, please, we have to go to Jack.”

“With what?” Will ran a hand through her hair, but kept a good distance just in case she tried to kiss him again.

“With-” A tear fell down her pretty cheek. He let her wipe it away herself.

“We both have personal grudges,” Will said softly. “I’ve been in denial a long time, but…but maybe it’s time to just face the truth.”

“And what’s the truth?”

“You slept with a man who doesn’t want you anymore.”

Alana pulled back, clearly stung. “And what’s your truth?”

“Hannibal had more insight into who I was than I thought. And I wanted to punish him for it.”

“Will, you really don’t-”

Will smiled. “I wanted to be right, Alana. I really did. It’s hard to admit that Hannibal recognized something I didn’t want to see in myself.”

“What did he recognize?” Alana was watching him now, her whole body still.

Will waved her off, ducking his head. “I don’t think baring my soul is a good idea right now. Let’s leave this on good terms, shall we?”

He stood, offering her a hand. “Go home, think about the timeline if you come up with something concrete that we can move on, call me first.”

“Why?”

So I can make sure no one finds you.

“So I can go to Jack with you, back you up.”

Alana smiled, stepping forward to hug Will. He made sure to keep his face angled from her mouth as he let her draw him in. “You’re a good man, Will.”

“I’m glad you think so.”

She paused at the door, shoulders slumping. “My boyfriend isn’t a serial killer, he just wanted to dump me.”

She laughed ruefully, closing her eyes tight. Will let himself laugh too, and if she didn’t hear the sharper note in his tone, so much the better.

“Tell you what, since the whole serial killer thing didn’t pan out, I can call a buddy of mine at the BPD, maybe he can get Hannibal’s car towed.”

Alana’s laugh lightened a bit. “I suppose it’s better than going over to egg his house.”

Will nodded, hand on the doorframe. “Much more elegant if you ask me.”

She reached to draw a hand along his jaw. He flinched slightly. Alana smiled; her eyes still watery. “Goodnight, Will.”

“Be safe, Alana.” And she would be, if she let this drop.

Will watched Alana’s car back down his driveway, waving placidly at it until the lights were out of sight. He felt almost euphoric, he wondered if Hannibal was impressed, if he understood what Will had been trying to tell him earlier. He fumbled for the phone in his pocket.

“Hannibal? Hannibal did you-” Will looked at the phone and saw that the call had ended. He hit redial and felt his shoulders tense when he was immediately sent to voicemail.

That wasn’t a good sign.

Will looked at the call duration — 15 minutes. Will let his eyes fall shut. He tried to piece together when Hannibal had hung up, probably before Will had essentially declared his love.

Fuck.

There were a few possibilities: Hannibal would panic and flee. Not likely, but if it happened, Will would be able to find him in some terracotta domed corner of Europe. Hannibal could decide to kill Alana. Possible; the doctor wouldn't want a witness, and he'd want to remove any players from the game that weren't him and Will. Abigail had proven that.

Finally, there was the most likely option: Hannibal was on his way to Wolf Trap to make a meal of Will.

Will gripped his phone in his hands. He should call Alana, let her know she was in danger. He should call Jack, tell him that he'd just betrayed the Chesapeake Ripper. Instead, Will went back to work on dinner, if Hannibal did show up tonight, perhaps they could share one last meal together before Will was transformed.

Will stared at the plate of fish next to him. It had gone cold hours ago. An offering rejected by an angry god. The dogs milled by his feet, refusing to settle while their master tapped nervously at the tabletop.

Will had been prepared to die. He'd been prepared to be used and consumed by Hannibal. He'd even prepared himself to explain what had happened, how his allegiances had changed, perhaps earn a place by Hannibal's side. But he hadn't prepared himself for this.

He tried dialing Hannibal's number again, listening to the voicemail in his empty kitchen.

Chapter End Notes

Next Up:
Will has a pretty big repair to make if he ever wants another cooking lesson.

Basement Remodel

Chapter Summary

Will decides to take a break from repairing and just start breaking things. Hannibal...might be ok with that.

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for reading this goofy story. And please remember Gwilbers is the best for reading this and fixing all my mistakes.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

In the following two weeks, Hannibal's house stopped breaking, but clearly, something was wrong with the doctor's phone. Will got used to being sent to voicemail.

"Hello, you've reached Dr. Hannibal Lecter. If this is about an appointment, please call my office. If you require anything else, please leave a brief message and your number. Have a good day."

Will sighed. It was probably the tenth sigh clogging up Hannibal's voicemail. Hanging up, he started pacing around his living room. He'd gotten a voicemail of his own today, left while Will was lecturing, from a pinch-voiced woman who told him Hannibal would have to cancel his appointment again. He called back in an unsociable mood. When pressed about why his psychiatrist was canceling two appointments in a row, the woman had said simply he'd get a referral in the mail.

A referral.

Will had taken a hard look at himself, lied to his coworkers and friend, plotted a murder to protect this fucking asshole — and he was getting a referral.

He stopped mid-step. The dogs stopped with him. Winston panted at his side, Buster was poised for action by his still aloft foot, Harley…Harley was eating a sock, goddamn it.

Will wrestled a wet Hanes tube sock out of his shepherd mix's throat, grumbling the whole time. "I was ready. I was ready and willing and what the fuck do I get for all this?"

Harley hacked up the sock with a wet gurgle. Buster tried to grab the soggy end and play tug. Winston looked at Will with the same long-suffering stare he imagined was on his

own face. “What the fuck was I supposed to do? Kill Alana the minute she walked into the house?”

Winston laid down, his head on Will’s knee. He sighed, tossing the soiled sock onto his bed and petting behind Winston’s ears.

“Maybe he hung up before the kiss? Maybe he just…heard Alana and I talking about…” Will winced. “About how I’m seducing him for the FBI.”

Buster walked onto Will’s lap, demanding affection. Will used his free hand to offer belly rubs. “He hasn’t killed a single person…I think I really hurt him.”

Will had expected to die, at least for Alana to die. The fact that he was still breathing and he received a rather embarrassed text from Alana last week talking about maintaining their friendship left Will at a bit of a loss. Did Hannibal not really want him?

He’d spent more of his free time than he’d like to admit obsessing over that very question. Will would lecture, ignore his students, snap at Jack or whoever was stupid enough to wander into his office, and go home to his dogs. At night, he’d dial Hannibal’s number, be sent to voicemail, and spend the rest of the evening making omelets and moping around with the dogs. On the upside, he could now roll a perfect French omelet with fresh chives in his sleep. He’d started feeding the damn things to the dogs. Winston preferred chervil on his omelets, which he thought Hannibal would appreciate, if they ever spoke again.

“I wish he’d just drop a body,” Will muttered to Buster. “Then, I’d at least know what he was feeling.”

Buster yawned in his master’s lap, totally unconcerned about the tatters of Will’s love life. Will sighed and got up, it was time for him to start making omelets.

His phone pinged as he sat out the eggs. A Google Alert about Hannibal Lecter. Will paused, it wasn’t from TattleCrime, so at least he hadn’t been caught. He clicked the alert and found an article about a benefit for Blue Herons. There was a write up about the wonderful people attending and a picture of Hannibal with his arm around the waist of a lovely woman who was evidently the head of the Heron charity.

Will blinked at the photo a few times. He allowed the feelings of jealousy and rage wash over him for a moment. But there was something wrong in the photo…

Enlarging it, Will studied Hannibal closely. The subtle smile was the same as Will remembered, and the graceful posture still cut a beautiful line, but Hannibal looked…human. His bow tie was crooked, the angle just off enough that Will itched to right it. There were five wrinkles on his tuxedo shirt, and one of the sleeves was hanging further out of the jacket than the other. The doctor’s hair was quaffed back in his signature gelled look, but a few pieces had fallen into his eyes. He looked like every other elegant affluent man in the photo.

“Oh my god, he’s a mess.” Will grinned at the photo, saving it to his phone. He’d been waiting for concrete proof that Hannibal had missed him desperately, and the doctor had delivered. A wrinkled shirt and a crooked bow tie were a cry for help if ever Will saw one,

and he was more than willing to answer it. He looked over his shoulder at Winston. “Think you can hold down the fort?”

Winston cocked his head as Will called his neighbor — he’d need someone to look in on the dogs in the morning.

The lights of the Bentley were bright as Hannibal pulled in the driveway. Will squinted but remained resolute as he leaned against the portico.

Hannibal did his best to ignore the obvious presence of a person on his doorstep — getting out of the car, brushing a hand down his suit, retrieving his briefcase. Will stepped off the porch to directly block the doctor’s path to his home.

“I believe my new secretary called you to inform you our appointment was canceled.”

Will hummed, smiling when Hannibal approached. “She did. Offered me a referral and everything.”

“Then why are you here?”

“Your window’s broken, I wanted to make sure it was fixed.”

“What windo-”

Will waved a crowbar in front of Hannibal’s eyes before chucking it as hard as he could through the large study window, smiling as it shattered. “That one.”

Hannibal’s lip curled just a bit, but he smoothed the expression and attempted to sidestep Will. “I’ll call a repairman.”

Will moved back into Hannibal’s path. “You have one.”

“I’m sure Alana Bloom needs some-”

“You were the one wasting time with Alana, not me.” Will tilted his head.

“It seems I’ve been wasting a great deal of time, lately.”

“You’re smarter than this, Hannibal.” Will reached up, allowing himself to grip the doctor’s sleeve and dig his fingers into the fine fabric. “Who did I call every time I pretended to ruin a dish? Alana Bloom? Do you think I come running whenever someone else has trouble opening a window?”

“The FBI paid you quite handsomely for your time, I’m sure.” Hannibal stilled under Will’s hand. It was a move designed to look like submission, but Will knew a predator ready to strike when he saw one.

Will pursed his lips, trying to parse out what words would get him in the house without blood loss. “They did, but you knew that the moment I showed up to resume my therapy,

didn't you?"

"I-"

"I don't think you particularly care if Jack knows I unclog your pipes." Will leaned in. "I'll keep the fact that you're single hung to myself."

"I don't want someone who believes me to be a killer in my home-"

"Never stopped you before." Will let the fingers clasped to Hannibal's arm loosen. Hannibal made no move to get away. "In fact, I think you rather liked playing this game, seeing if you could elude the FBI while flirting with their lead bloodhound."

"It should be quite clear to you that I've ended whatever game you think we were playing."

"Yeah, but you didn't end the game because of my job, Hannibal. You ended it because of Alana." Will let his smile grow teeth. "So whatever type of monster you are, it's safe to assume you have green eyes."

"I believe you described Alana as kissable, once," Hannibal sniffed. "Are you telling me you no longer find her so?"

Will shook his head. "Oh no, she's still very kissable, I'm pretty sure you know that. But that's not the question that needs answering, Hannibal."

"And what question do you need answered?" Hannibal leaned in; Will could practically see the hook in his mouth.

Tilting his head, Will lofted an eyebrow as he studied the man before him. "Are you kissable, Dr. Lecter?"

Hannibal moved between heartbeats, breaking Will's hold on his arm and snatching a handful of Will's cotton Henley. The doctor hauled Will close, black-eyed and snarling. Will was dizzy with want of this incredible monster.

"Well," Will's voice had gone rough. "are you?"

"Extremely," growled Hannibal, reeling Will into a connection that was half bite, half kiss.

Will bit back, groaning as he grabbed handfuls of Hannibal's hair and held his monster close. Snagging Hannibal's lower lip in his teeth, Will tugged at the vulnerable flesh until he felt himself being lifted.

He wrapped his legs around Hannibal's waist, grinning as he was carried to the front door. Hannibal pressed him against the door, fumbling with keys and grinding against Will at an angle so perfect Will was afraid he'd come in his pants before they found a solid surface.

“If you don’t open that door now, I’m giving your neighbors one hell of a show,” Will hissed, rolling his hips as Hannibal sucked along his jugular.

The door swung open. Vaguely, Will noted that they were in the foyer. Hannibal’s mouth was back on his jaw, teeth nipping neatly along Will’s chin until the empath dipped down to meet his lips. The next set of kisses were softer, lips tugging softly as Will delighted in the small noises rumbling in Hannibal’s chest.

The doctor’s hands had found their way to Will’s ass, helping Will grind against him as he stumbled them toward the stairs.

A crunching noise finally broke through Will’s kiss drunk haze. He pulled back, glancing down to see that a few shards of glass had scattered into the foyer. “Shit, Hannibal…Hannibal, stop.”

Will nearly landed on his ass he was released so quickly. He staggered against the study doorway before righting himself.

“Will, I-” Will pushed his fingers to Hannibal’s lips, stroking his thumb along the doctor’s strong jaw. He glanced into the study and grimaced.

Three panels of glass had shattered when Will chucked the crowbar into the huge glass window, with at least five more cracked and threatening to fall. The glass had sprayed out, coating the harpsichord and floor leading to the foyer. The crowbar laid beside a green chair, part of a shattered ram skull cradling it.

“Shit.” Will panted, trying not to think about the man currently nuzzling into the palm of his hand. “We need to tarp up the window at least.”

“Will-”

“It could rain…it’ll only take a few minutes.” He squinted at the floor. “Vacuum up the glass while I-”

“Will-” Hannibal’s fingers wrapped softly around Will’s wrist, pulling him away from the destruction.

“I wasn’t thinking. I should have thrown it through the foyer door, there are fewer breakables. I think your harpsichord is OK, if there are scratches I can-”

Will was yanked backward, landing on Hannibal’s chest. “Later.”

“We need to seal the window, and the glass-”

“Forget the fucking glass.”

Will froze, eyes wide. “I didn’t know you knew words like that.”

“I know words like that in seven languages.” Hannibal paused. “Are you genuinely concerned about the state of my study, or are you looking for an excuse to stop this?”

Will wound his arms around Hannibal's neck, drawing the man into a soft, seeking kiss. "If it rains your floor will be ruined."

Hannibal's arms crept around Will's waist, drawing him in. "I know an excellent handyman."

Will angled his head, teasing the tip of his tongue along Hannibal's cupid's bow. "Then I guess you should call him after you take me upstairs."

Hannibal hummed into a few short, chaste kisses. "I'm sure he'll be here first thing in the morning."

"Not first thing," Will said, grinning. "He's planning on sleeping in a bit."

"After 10, then, if he's able to walk." Hannibal's eyes danced. He dipped low and threw Will over his shoulder. Will let out a surprised yelp before laughing as Hannibal crunched through a few more pieces of glass and headed for the stairs.

Hannibal released Will a few steps from the bed, stepping back and assessing Will has he loosened his tie.

"Why Dr. Lecter, did something else break in your bedroom?" Will grinned yanking the Henley over his head and tossing it to the side.

"Not yet, but I rather fear for the bedframe." Hannibal pulled his tie free, tossing it to the side. Will stepped into his space, fingers eagerly working on the doctor's waistcoat buttons.

"Don't worry, I'll build you a better-" Will frowned, fingers stumbling over the buttons. "Fuck, how long does it take you to undress every night?"

"There's a trick to it." Hannibal took Will's hands in his, kissing the fingers softly before letting them drop. With the barest hint of a smile, he sank his fingers between the folds of his waistcoat and yanked.

The sound of fabric ripping filled the air. Will was thankful one of the flying buttons didn't land in his open mouth. Hannibal had torn both his waistcoat and shirt open, revealing a heaving powerful chest and a thatch of greying hair covering it.

Will blinked, licking his lips. "Naked. Now."

Hannibal's smile grew wider as he rolled his shoulders out of the torn clothing and let the fabric fall at his feet. "What a wonderful idea."

Will's hands fell to his pants, fumbling to undo the button and kick out of his shoes at the same time. He managed to free himself without falling over, but it was a near thing. When he righted himself and scrambled onto the bed, he found Hannibal, barefoot but still annoyingly in his trousers, watching him with a large smile.

“Look how eager you are, handsome boy.” Will’s stomach contracted around the praise, his ears ringing at the pleasure it evoked. “Tell me, Will, when you fixed my window…what would you have done if had I grabbed you and dragged you back to this very bed?”

“I would have begged,” Will rasped. He watched as Hannibal carefully undid his belt, running the supple leather through his hands before letting it fall to the floor. He undid his trousers, observing Will as he pushed them off his hips and let them pool at his feet. He stepped out of the fabric and walked to the foot of the bed. Will was mesmerized by the small scrap of silken fabric wrapped around Hannibal’s hips, obscenely tented and stretched taut.

“And what would you have begged for?” Hannibal toyed with the band on his underwear. “To be released? For me to stop?”

Will squirmed trying to hook an ankle around Hannibal’s hip. The doctor caught his foot, carefully thumbing along the Achilles tendon. Hannibal’s desire started poking into his mind. He could see teeth sunk into his flesh, fingernails clawing down his back. His mind swam as his desires began to swirl with the doctor’s own. “Will? What would you have begged for?”

“You know.”

“I do, which is why I want you to say it.”

“Anything you’ll give me,” Will hissed, raising his chin in challenge, even as he felt his cheeks flame.

Hannibal hummed as if seriously considering Will’s request, then bent to slip long legs out of his underwear. When he stood, Will felt himself shiver as his body ran hot and cold. The reality of Hannibal was so much better than the image Will’s mind had supplied him. The powerful chest and densely muscled arms were the same, but there was a beautiful softness to Hannibal’s body as well. A bramble of greying chest hair covered Hannibal’s pecks, trailing lazily down a slightly soft stomach. Will’s fingers flexed in the sheets, eager to sink his hands into that hair, sink his teeth into the vulnerable flesh just below it. The doctor’s cock lay thick and ruddy against his thigh, filling steadily as the man observed Will. Hannibal tilted his head. “And what will you give me in return?”

Anything. Everything.

Will’s mouth fell open, but his breath caught on the words. His hands clawed into Hannibal’s linens again, body trying to right itself, to regulate. He could feel his own desire coursing through him, but the tide of Hannibal’s flowed through him too. It was too much, and he could feel himself slipping below the surface, losing himself to it.

Hannibal crawled onto the bed, body all rippling sinew and muscle in the low light of the bedroom. Will felt pinned, still gasping as a predator loomed large over him. He could feel his need and Hannibal’s, but he couldn’t seem to find air.

A large hand cupped Will’s jaw. “Will? I need you to focus-”

“I…there’s so much…”

“It’s just like cooking together, darling boy.” Soft lips kissed along his jaw, teeth finding and tugging an earlobe.

“Will…will you…” Will knew he was red with embarrassment, he clung to Hannibal’s shoulders, burying his face in the doctor’s strong embrace.

“Do you want to work from my recipe this time, Will?” The empath nodded. If he was going to let himself drown, it would be with this man. He’d take them both over the edge. Hannibal shifted, his bulk pressing Will into the bed. “Close your eyes.”

In the dark, the tide receded just a little. He could feel his own mind again, the waves of Hannibal’s need ebbing just a bit. “Take three deep breaths, then we shall begin.”

Will inhaled the scent of earthy aftershave and sweat, his mouth watering as he let the Hannibal-spiced air into him. After three breaths, he opened his eyes to find Hannibal watching him. He looked so human with bangs falling over his eyes, lips parted and kiss swollen. Will managed a smile. “OK, what are we making?”

Hannibal kissed him, slow and filthy, the doctor’s tongue stroking along Will’s teeth as he rolled their bodies together. Will made a soft noise, digging his fingers into Hannibal’s hips to increase the friction. Hannibal smiled when they pulled apart. “First, I think we should familiarize ourselves with our work areas.”

Will smiled, feeling some of the tension leak from his system as Hannibal peppered kisses down his neck. The doctor trailed his lips over Will’s collarbone, teeth catching as he kissed along the bone. Will shivered, arching as Hannibal fitted his hands around Will’s hips and dragged his lips over a stiff nipple. Will whined, fingers clawing up Hannibal’s shoulders and sinking into his hair, holding the doctor’s mouth against him. Sharp pain made Will flex his hips as Hannibal closed his teeth around the sensitive peak before soothing it with a few wet sucks.

He looked up at Will, hair a mess and spit-slick lips smiling. “It’s always preferable to know exactly what you’re working with.”

Hannibal dragged his mouth across Will’s chest to bring teeth and tongue to Will’s other nipple. Distantly, Will knew he was making ungodly pleading noises, but his whole world seemed to center on Hannibal’s mouth and the sharp pleasure it offered.

Will groaned when Hannibal’s fingers tightened on his hips, mouth sliding wet and hot over Will’s stomach as it kissed its way south. “Fuck, *fuck*, Hannibal, pl-”

“Beside you, darling,” Hannibal raised up, chin centimeters from Will’s weeping cock. “The top drawer of the nightstand, I believe you’ll find an ingredient.”

Will nodded, he felt like he was floating. His hands felt heavy as he grabbed at the drawer, retrieving the lube with thick fingers. He sat the black container by his hip, staring with foggy vision at the man smiling up at him. Hannibal’s chin dipped, rubbing slightly

against Will's aching cock. A day's worth of stubble caught the delicate skin as the doctor dragged his face against it.

Will howled. His whole body sparked with pain and pleasure. When firm hands forced his hips back to the bed, Will looked down, amazed he hadn't come. Hannibal grinned at him, toothy and feral as he nuzzled against Will's cock again.

"G-guh…"

"More?"

Will nodded. His body was taut as he watched Hannibal rub against his groin like a contented cat, stubble rubbing Will raw, razing the skin from his bones. It felt… transformative, as though Hannibal was reshaping him even now, forming him into something stronger and more natural.

Hannibal's mouth fitted to the base of Will's cock, pressing sloppy kisses on heated flesh. He traced a vein with his tongue, offering Will a smug little twist of his lips before sinking his mouth around the empath's cock. Will writhed. His hands found Hannibal's hair and shoulders, fingernails digging into tender flesh. Each time he scratched along Hannibal's skin, the doctor scraped his teeth on Will's cock. It didn't feel like a warning, it felt like a conjoining. Their desires blended again in Will's mind, waves of pain and pleasure. He didn't drown this time, he let Hannibal's body buoy him, letting him float with the sensations that whited out every other thought in his mind.

When Will started rolling his hips into Hannibal's mouth, the doctor stopped, gazing at Will with black eyes. Will moaned when Hannibal sat up, the empath's body felt cold without the solid form blanketing his legs. He watched as Hannibal opened the lube, slicking two fingers.

"May I?"

Something cracked in Will's chest and a laugh burst forth. When he saw Hannibal pull back, with a positively goofy expression of confusion, the laughter grew. Will grabbed Hannibal's wrist, bringing it to his chest as he laughed. After a few moments, he found his breath, bringing Hannibal's hand up and kissing the back of it fondly.

"I'm sorry, I-" Will huffed again, then shook his head. "All this longing and flirting and then you ask me that, like…"

Like I wasn't yours from the very first.

Will faltered, offering Hannibal a helpless shrug. The doctor smiled back at Will, his eyes crinkling with affection. "I'm just happy to see you smile, Will."

They kissed, slower this time and full of promise. Will pressed himself into Hannibal's body, letting his own warm at the touch.

Hannibal pulled back, expression serious but eyes dancing. “You never did answer me.”

Will spread his legs, looping one slender limb over Hannibal’s knees. “You may.”

He couldn’t stop the snort, then the giggles. But he paused when he heard a high-pitched laugh from the man next to him. Hannibal leaned forward, still chuckling softly as he slotted himself between Will’s legs. The laughter died between them, but not the smiles. Hannibal kissed him once, drawing back just to make Will chase his lips for another kiss.

“Incorrigible,” Hannibal purred. Will felt something burst forth bright and warm in his chest. He looped his arms around Hannibal’s neck, demanding inelegant, grinning kisses as the man over him began stroking soft fingers over his hole.

“O-oh,” Will trembled when the first finger breached him, tensing immediately.

“Have you done this before, darling boy?”

Will hissed, trying to force his body to relax. He craned up, seeking Hannibal’s mouth. The doctor kept it just out of reach, watching Will intently. “Y-yeah, couple times by myself.”

Hannibal hummed, slowing the movement of his hand as he dipped to kiss Will’s neck. “A few sticky fumblings in your own bed?”

Will groaned as Hannibal stroked along his prostate; just the tease of sensation. Hannibal’s teeth caught on the knob of Will’s jaw; the doctor’s lips drawing back to whisper softly in his ear. “And who did you think of as you fucked yourself with your own fingers, I wonder?”

A broken sound cracked from Will’s throat. Hannibal sank his teeth into the vibrations.

“You enjoy that don’t you, darling? You like pushing me to base words.” Hannibal lapped at the mark he left on Will’s neck. He added another finger and Will’s hand scrabbled to find purchase, anything to keep him from soaring off the bed. “Would you like some more, pretty thing? Something crude to focus on while you adjust?”

Will mashed their mouths together, sucking on Hannibal’s tongue as he fucked himself on the doctor’s fingers. They broke apart on a moan, Will raking his fingers down Hannibal’s chest, pulling on the hair. “Please.”

Hannibal’s eyes glinted. “I’m going to stretch you with two fingers, Will. Just enough to keep you from tearing before I take you. I want you to feel my cock, darling. I want you to watch those beautiful eyes roll back in your head as you burn between agony and rapture. It’ll hurt, my love, but we both know you want that, don’t we? You want my teeth in your neck and my cock in your ass, don’t you?”

“O-oh god, please, now. F-fuck me now.” Will yanked on Hannibal’s chest hair, savoring the hiss it drew.

“Not yet, wild thing,” Hannibal crooked his fingers, rubbing insistently on Will’s prostate. “Once you’re writhing on my hand like the wanton little creature I know you to be, I’m going to pull out and trace over that fluttering hole. You’ll feel the absence, feel like I gutted you and hollowed you out. And only then, only when you beg for me to fill you back up will I take you.”

Will’s whole body was shaking, he still felt the stretch every time Hannibal moved his fingers, but it wasn’t enough. Nothing ever seemed to be enough with Hannibal. Groaning in frustration, Will began to move in earnest, fucking himself on Hannibal’s hands while trying to pull the man in question on top of him. Hannibal resisted, only allowing short kisses as he pressed his fingers relentlessly into Will. The empath bared his teeth. “Now. You’ll f-fuck me now or I’ll tear you to fucking pieces.”

Hannibal grinned, eyes glittering as he leaned over Will. “You terrifying thing, I think you would.”

Will lunged forward, biting hard at Hannibal’s shoulder as he grabbed Hannibal’s wrist and tore it from his body. He did feel gutted, as if Hannibal had pulled everything that wasn’t him from Will’s body, leaving him hollow and wanting.

“My wonderful Will,” Hannibal rasped, reaching with shaking fingers for the lube to slick his cock. He moved slightly, not pulling away from Will’s teeth, but pressing into them as he hitched Will’s thighs over his hips. “I think I’ll keep you.”

Will clenched his jaw, unwilling to let his prize go. Hannibal shifted and Will felt the blunt press of the doctor’s cock against him. He bit down as Hannibal thrust forward, the burn of penetration zipping up his spine as coppery blood filled his mouth. Will wanted to chew, consume — take Hannibal as he was being taken.

Hannibal pulled out, thrusting shallowly into Will — tickling, aching movements that fell just short of where Will needed him to be. With a pained groan, Will released Hannibal’s shoulder, bloody mouth snarling at the man above him. “Hannibal-”

The doctor paused; his expression frozen as his eyes swept over Will’s face. Tears formed as he brought a hand to Will’s chin, trailing through some of his own blood before holding it to Will’s mouth for the empath to bite and suck.

“Exquisite,” he whispered. Will could feel the blood from Hannibal’s shoulder dripping onto his chest. He looked into Hannibal’s face, utterly lost to such awe. He wanted to tell Hannibal he felt the same. To admit he saw the beauty in his tableaus, to beg to learn at his hand how to elevate man into art. He wanted to confess his love and seal them together forever in the same breath.

Instead, he lapped at Hannibal’s weeping wound before offering the cannibal his own blood on Will’s tongue. Hannibal keened as he took Will’s mouth, slamming home and fucking Will deep. The next minutes were all teeth and nails — Hannibal thrusting into Will’s prostate and Will clawing intricate slices along Hannibal’s back in patterns Matthew Brown would have never thought to make. It was brutal, it was animalistic —

It was beautiful.

Will wondered if he'd ever truly loved the man, or if this monster, who was all power but careful, blunted teeth with Will in his arms, was always what drew him to Hannibal.

"Fuck, *fuck*, H-Hannibal, mark me," Will felt so close. His body undulated on waves of pleasure, he needed something sharp to keep him from slipping under again.

Hannibal stilled for a moment, Will realized distantly the doctor had tears in his eyes. Strong arms banded beneath Will's back and lifted. He was drawn up to Hannibal's chest, crying out at the change in angle as he settled onto Hannibal's lap. When Hannibal began thrusting again, the new angle went deep, stroking along Will's prostate with every thrust.

Will clung to Hannibal, moaning as the doctor's stomach provided dizzying friction for his weeping cock. Hannibal tightened his hold around Will's chest, it felt as though he was sinking into the man beneath him, becoming one…and maybe that's what was happening.

Dipping his face to nuzzle against the open bite mark on Hannibal's shoulder, Will teased his teeth along the torn flesh, encouraging blood to bead up from the wound. It was what he needed, Hannibal's sweat and blood in his teeth, the sound of the man he loved groaning softly in his ear. Will bit down again and came, his untouched cock spasming between them.

He let himself fall back, Hannibal's arms supporting him even as the doctor's thrusts grew erratic. After a few moments, Will's brain blinked back to life and he was overwhelmed with the need to see Hannibal lost to him. With a shaking hand, Will gathered a bit of his release, holding it to Hannibal's lips. Hannibal bit at Will's fingers, feasting like a snapping beast at the offering. He came with a roar, Will's fingers still snagged between his teeth.

They slumped together — panting, sticky, and serenely happy.

I love you.

Will wasn't sure if he said it, or if he merely willed the thought into being as he let his head drop to Hannibal's bloodied shoulder. The doctor must have understood, he murmured back in a language Will didn't know, but Will could feel it in the tremors of the arms still banded around him, and in the soft licks along his bitten fingers.

"We should-"

"Never move again? I think that's a great idea."

Hannibal huffed, this time the nips to his fingers were playful. "You won't think that when our sweat cools and our release turns tacky."

"Just…wait." Will looked up, eyes half-lidded and muscles heavy. "I just want this for a few more minutes."

"I would happily give you an eternity."

Will smiled, letting his mind slip beneath the waves. He didn't have to worry as long as Hannibal held him up.

Will found he liked cooking at 3 am. Hannibal's kitchen echoed the crisp clang of the whisk as he beat the eggs. There was something elicit about wandering through Hannibal's domain, using pans and ingredients without permission, wrapping Hannibal's apron around his boxer-clad frame.

Although, he supposed he did have tacit permission from Hannibal, who had been watching him for at least five minutes. Will hadn't turned to acknowledge him, but the kitchen was getting cold and Will decided he would rather feel the heat of a body than the weight of a stare.

"It's nice to use a whisk that isn't covered in dog hair." He didn't turn, but the air in the room shifted as Hannibal approached. Will poured the eggs into the pan, agitating them slightly.

"Let's try to keep it that way, shall we?" Lips pressed hot and wet to the back of Will's neck. Will shivered, focusing on the eggs. He'd done this 100 times now; it would be a shame to burn the first meal he'd ever made Hannibal. "Were you still hungry, Will?"

"We did skip dinner." Will dropped his shoulder to level a small glare at the grinning man behind him. "I'm frankly surprised the great Hannibal Lecter would miss an opportunity to feed anyone."

"Forgive me," Hannibal let his chin drop to Will's shoulder, his body fitted to the younger man's back. Large hands fitted along Will's hips, toying with the apron. Will nearly agitated the eggs out of the pan. "I was focused on sating another hunger."

Will snorted, moving the eggs off the burner to set. "Grab a plate for me and go cut some fresh chives. This will be ready in a few minutes."

"Yes sir, Chef Graham." Hannibal's hands slipped from Will's waist and the cold crept back up Will's spine.

Adding another pat of butter, Will began to roll the omelet, carefully nudging the custardy eggs with a spatula. Hannibal returned, quietly sitting a plate by Will's side. He rolled the eggs onto the plate, expelling a relieved breath when they held their shape. He cut a fresh pat of butter to gloss over the top, then looked to Hannibal, who obediently sprinkled chives over the dish.

"I'm starting to suspect you're a better cook than you've led me to believe." They settled in the chair in the far corner of the room, Will sprawled across Hannibal's lap, holding the plate aloft. Hannibal's thumb absently caressed Will's knee as the empath sliced a fork through the omelet, offering the bite to Hannibal. "I thought you were hungry?"

"I am, but I've got to keep your strength up too."

Hannibal smiled, sharp teething sinking into offered food and pulling it from the fork. Will watched as the doctor's eyes fluttered closed. Will loved watching Hannibal taste things, his whole body seemed to come alive as he carefully considered the bite. When he swallowed, Hannibal opened his eyes, a lopsided toothy smile on his face. "Absolutely delicious."

Will's whole body suffused with warmth, a pleased shiver in the base of his spine. He grinned through a forkful of buttery eggs. Hannibal smiled when Will held out another bite.

"You enjoy providing for me, don't you?" His eyes glittered as he took the offered food.

"I like knowing you come to me first."

Another bite. Another Smile.

Hannibal cocked his head. "Careful, Will, you're creating expectation."

"You created the expectation; I'm just helping it flourish." They ate the last bites in silence, the click of the fork against plate sounding between them.

Hannibal licked the fork clean with a flourish, making Will grin. "Am I to expect you to take over cooking duties? I confess I'm not sure I'm prepared to rewire a broken lamp."

Will shook his head. "I would never take away your art, Hannibal."

The doctor stilled; his eyes suddenly sharp. "Wouldn't you?"

"Never." Will got up, offering his free hand to Hannibal. "I just thought I'd be in charge of after sex snacks."

Hannibal grabbed Will's hand, smile glinting brightly in the kitchen lights. "I fear that means you'll be cooking more than I."

Will dropped the plate carelessly on the counter. "I can live with that."

He took off up the stairs, Hannibal following so close behind he didn't notice the lock to the pantry had been tampered with.

Sunlight squeezing past a small gap in his curtains finally woke Hannibal up. Usually he was up before the sun, but Will had kept him up until five, so he supposed they both deserved a bit of a lie-in.

"Good mor-" Will's side of the bed was cold and Hannibal paused. Surely Will wasn't making another omelet. He listened but couldn't hear any movement in his home. He considered calling out, but decided against it.

There was likely an explanation. Perhaps he had to tend to the dogs. Hannibal would go downstairs and find a note. Anything else after their night together would be…

unforgivably rude.

Dressing quickly in a red sweater and a pair of linen sleep pants, just in case he was able to find Will and lure him back to bed, Hannibal descended the stairs, searching for any sign of life. He smiled when he glanced in the study. The large picture window was tarped, the glass swept up and his knocked over skulls righted on the side table. He was just about to inspect his harpsichord for scratches when he heard a muffled noise and cursing.

Turning to the kitchen, Hannibal paused in the doorway. Six folders sat open on the kitchen island, his kills looking back at him in glossy photos. He ran his fingers along the man in prayer, mind racing as to when Will had retrieved the folders.

Another bang had Hannibal pivoting towards the pantry. He was sure he had locked it — had it been open last night?

When Hannibal saw the trap door open, he took a moment to breathe. He'd prepared for this contingency. He knew there was always a chance he might have to kill Will, just as he had Agent Katz. He'd allow himself to cry while he ate Will's heart raw, he could afford himself that much release before he'd have to wrap up contingencies at his other home and flee…

Grabbing his scalpel from where it was secured under his sink, Hannibal slipped down the basement stairs on silent bare feet. It was odd to dread a hunt. He comforted himself with the notion that Will would die a worthy death and likely give him a beautiful scar to remember him by.

At the base of the stairs, Hannibal pressed against the far wall, moving through shadows as he watched Will's blurred form through the plastic curtains. He was so lovely, even obscured by industrial plastic sheeting.

Quietly, Hannibal slipped past the curtains and found…chaos.

Will stood shirtless and panting amidst a swirl of drywall and machinery. He'd pulled Hannibal's band saw from where it was anchored on the wall and ripped out all the Tuscan tile Hannibal had chosen for the backsplash of his kill room. Currently, the empath was using his crowbar to pull at the sink, ruining the gilded fixtures as he pried it from the wall.

"Couldn't have just been one fucking room, could it?" Will puffed as the sink finally came free and fell with a clunk to the floor. He turned to Hannibal. "Of course you'd need a whole kill basement. Kill rooms are for peasants."

Hannibal stilled, his grip faltering on the scalpel. "Will-"

"Oh, are you kidding me?" Will stomped toward Hannibal, shoving the doctor hard. Hannibal let himself be pressed into the wall, staring at Will's frowning face. "Don't you dare go all still on me like you're picking out a recipe. DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG THIS IS GOING TO TAKE ME?"

Hannibal blinked. Will turned, gesturing toward the mess. Hannibal should strike now, should end this.

"It's gonna take me every fucking bit of three months to get this place looking normal." Will turned to him, making an annoyed face and batting the scalpel out of Hannibal's hand. "I was thinking something simple, like a kitchen storage room? Maybe a clubbed basement with an extra wine cellar?"

Will gestured to the refrigerator where a joint of Abel Gideon was curing. "That's going to have to go, but we can put another fridge in here if you like, make it like a real chef's pantry?"

"What?"

Will waved a dismissive hand.

"We can figure that out once I scour the place for blood evidence." With a sigh, Will tapped his boot on the drain in the floor. "Christ, that's gonna be fun to tear out."

Hannibal felt utterly lost. This must be how Frederick Chilton spent the majority of his days. No wonder the man was so unpleasant. "Will, what are you pro-"

"You can't be the Ripper anymore, Hannibal."

Hannibal raised his chin. "I'm not-"

Will was in Hannibal's face in a flash, snarling as he held up the crowbar. "If you finish that sentence you better kill me, because I swear to God I'll knock the teeth out of your head if you lie to me while I'm doing this."

"And what, precisely, are you doing, Will?"

"Just because I told Jack in my expert opinion you aren't the Ripper, doesn't mean that he won't get a bug up his ass and get a warrant one day." Will shrugged. "He was pretty pissed I wasted so much government money only to exonerate-"

"You exonerated me?" Hannibal shifted his weight trying to rebalance. This wasn't their game. This wasn't the game he thought he was playing at all.

Will smiled. "Unless you want to correct me and make a formal confession, I filed an official report yesterday recanting my suspicions. The timelines for the kills are impossible considering the schedules we know you keep. You'd need some type of murder basement filled with butchering tools and blood drains for that to be possible."

Will looked around the room. Hannibal focused on deep, even breaths.

"Plus I've been in several rooms of your house and found nothing odd, certainly no scalpels taped under tables and sinks." Will shrugged. "I explained it to Alana when she came over the other night."

Hannibal's lip curled. Will raised an eyebrow. "Guess you hung up before that part?"

"You-"

"Here's the thing." Will leaned next to Hannibal, staring at the ruins of the kill room. "If I start fucking you, Jack or Alana will start wondering. I know they're trusting, but they're not fools."

"That is a *thing*, indeed."

"So, I need you to go upstairs and look at your profile. Consider the crime scenes and the resources needed. Then, you're going to pick a new Ripper." Will turned, thumping Hannibal in the chest with the crowbar. "A real one this time, not fucking Chilton."

Hannibal huffed. "That was perfectly-"

"It was petty." Will rolled his eyes. "Worse, it was lazy. No one competent would ever believe Frederick Chilton was the Chesapeake Ripper, the man threw a public tantrum when he wasn't invited to your dinner party."

Hannibal smiled. "That's why I withheld the invitation."

Will snapped in Hannibal's face. "I need you to focus on something that isn't how clever you are — just this once, I promise."

Hannibal glared, but remained silent. Will nodded to himself.

"Go upstairs, write me a decent profile of someone who could believably be the Ripper. When you're done, I'll join you and we can figure out how I can come to that conclusion and present it to Jack."

"And then?"

"And then, I'll start investigating this suspect. I'll provoke them a bit, tell Jack I feel threatened…" Will waved the crowbar in front of himself as if conducting his fantasy sequence. "And then I disappear."

"Oh my, how horrible."

Will hummed. "Heartbreaking. Jack will get a warrant, Jimmy and Z will find evidence in the new suspect's house, and my last earthly act as Will Graham will be to catch the Ripper."

Both men stared silently for a moment before Hannibal snarled at a sharp jab to his ribs.

"DO NOT fuck Alana at my funeral."

"Honestly, Will-"

“I’m fucking serious. I will turn you into the Chesapeake Limper if you fucking touch her again.”

Hannibal straightened himself. “And what shall I be doing after your funeral?”

Will cocked his head. “Tragic really, this whole episode will be too much for you. You’ll need a fresh start. Somewhere warm and with a beach. You’ll adopt all my dogs and move-”

“All of them?”

“All of them, Hannibal.”

“What if I found excellent homes for-”

The crowbar was back, tapping along Hannibal’s bitten shoulder. “EVERY. SINGLE. DOG.”

“Winston doesn’t care for me.”

“You’ll both live.” Will lowered the crowbar. “You sell this house and you get us a small, unassuming little one-bedroom th-”

“Two bedroom.”

Will scoffed. “Hannibal, after this is done, I’m not going to be apart from you.”

“I know.” Hannibal pressed his lips together. “We’ll need a second bedroom.”

He studied Will for a moment before taking his last leap. “It seems I may be able to help you convincingly fake a death.”

Will squinted, then his face went slack. The crowbar clattered to the ground. “You-she…but I threw up her…I-”

“One can live without an ear, Will,” Hannibal said gently.

Will froze in place, eyes unseeing, breath caught in his throat. After a few beats he lunged, shoving Hannibal hard into the concrete wall.

“I’m-” Will kissed Hannibal hard, more of a headbutt than an affectionate gesture.

“Fucking-” Another kiss, this one with a bite. Hannibal felt his knees turning weak.

“Furious about this.” The final kiss was longer, with less teeth. Hannibal pressed into it, making a small noise when Will licked into his mouth. When they pulled apart, Will’s brow was still furrowed. “We’re going to have a talk about open communication when this is finished.”

Hannibal's eyes narrowed. "I will not withhold children if you won't withhold your involvement in police investigations against me."

Will sighed. "I think we need to base this relationship on sex for a little bit, 'til we figure the rest out."

"Agreed."

"Can I see her soon?"

"That may be too dangerous, but I'm sure she'd love it if you joined me when I called her this afternoon."

Will nodded. "We have a lot to talk about."

"We do." Hannibal stole another kiss, smiling softly when Will leaned into it. "I'll go prepare some food and see if I can find you a Ripper to catch."

"Thanks darlin', I'll be down here if you need me."

Hannibal grinned when Will swatted him on the ass as he turned to leave.

Hannibal lured Will upstairs three hours later with a Croque Madame and the promise of a shoulder rub. The empath emerged from Hannibal's pantry lair caked in grime with a dusting of drywall in his curls. Hannibal had never seen anything more beautiful.

He pressed Will against the wine rack, grinding lightly against the smaller man as he licked the salt from his skin. Will laughed, pushing at Hannibal's chest.

"After I've eaten!" Hannibal relented, his drive to feed Will was nearly as powerful as his drive to fuck him.

Will moaned lightly as he bit into the sandwich. "Fuck, you're fantastic, you know that?

Hannibal preened under Will's smile.

"So," Will asked as he chewed another mouthful. "Found any good candidates?"

"One." Hannibal smiled. "Have you ever heard of the Vergers?"

Chapter End Notes

Next Up:
Are you sick of quarantine fics? TOO BAD. I have a fic coming up where Hannibal gets

to shelter-in-place with seven dogs.
Hope to see you Wednesday!

End Notes

As always, this work is complete and I'll be updating Wednesdays.

Next Up:
Will wants to make dinner. If only he knew someone who could help him with that task...

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!